

Programme Review Report Programme Reviews – 2018 BBA Hons (Accounting) Degree Programme Faculty of Management and Finance University of Ruhuna 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018





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Quality Assurance Council University Grants Commission

University	:	University of Ruhuna
Faculty	:	Faculty of Management and Finance (FMF)
Program	:	Bachelor of Business Administration Honours in Accounting Degree Programme
<b>Review Panel</b>	:	Prof. Mayuri Wijesinghe Prof. Theodore Fernando Dr. Ratnam Vijayakumaran
Site Visit Dates	:	13 – 16 August 2018

**University of Ruhuna** 

Faculty of Management and Finance (FMF)

**Bachelor of Business Administration** Honours in Accounting **Degree Programme** 

**Review Panel:** 

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#### **Section 1: The Programme Under Review**

The Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree in the University of Ruhuna was initiated in 1985/1986, while the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Honours in Accounting degree [BBAHons (Accounting)] was offered from 2003, with the inception of the Faculty of Management and Finance (FMF). The FMF is at present the second largest faculty of the University of Ruhuna in terms of student population (1511 in 2018). The faculty comprises three departments, namely, Accounting and Finance, Management and Entrepreneurship, and Marketing. These three departments offer four BBAHons degrees, namely BBAHons (Entrepreneurship), BBAHons (Human Resource Management), BBAHons (Marketing,) and BBAHons (Accounting). The present review by the Quality Assurance Council of the UGC covers the degree programme on Accounting. Around 320 students are allocated by the University Grants Commission (UGC) each year for the BBA programme (see Table 1.1), and the faculty has requested a higher allocation (up to 400) which can be accommodated since new infra-structure facilities are available to the FMF from 2017.

Academic Year	No. of Students enrolled	UGC Quota
2016/2017	314	320
2015/2016	316	320
2014/2015	320	320
2013/2014	303	320
2012/2013	314	320

**Table 1.1:** Student allocations by the UGC to the BBA degree programme and the numbers enrolled over the last five years

The BBAHons degree programmes offered by the FMF are equivalent to Level 6 of the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF), each comprising 120 Credits offered over four years. The BBA programme is conducted entirely in English. The three departments offer a combination of common courses in the first three semesters, and in the second semester of the second year the students have the option of specializing in one of four fields, and the selections are based on merit (i.e. on the marks obtained in the second semester of the first year) and student preference. The BBAHons (Accounting) is one such stream of specialization opened to the students in the faculty.

The BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme, which is the focus of the present report, has progressed for almost fifteen years, with around 120 students being selected each year. Its

popularity is evident from the consistently high numbers that have chosen this stream in the past few years (Table 1.2). The breakdown of the present student population within the faculty, i.e. those enrolled in the BBA degree (years 1 and 2) and BBAHons degree programmes (years 3 and 4) are shown in Table 1.3. Two batches were taken within the same year to clear the backlog and hence two batches are following the first year of study.

<b>Table 1.2:</b>	The number of BBAHons students specializing in the different areas of study
	during the years 2010 - 2015.

Year	Accounting	Marketing	HRM	Entrepreneurship	Total
2014/2015	120	97	56	33	306
2013/2014	137	62	42	39	280
2012/2013	129	71	57	36	293
2011/2012	112	67	76	35	290
2010/2011	120	84	68	37	309

Table 1.3: Students enrolled in the BBA programme at present in different years of study.

Level	Total	Accounting	Entrepreneurship	Human Resource Management	Marketing
1001 Level (2017/2018 intake)*	314		Common		
1000 Level (2016/2017 intake)*	317		Common C		
2000 Level (2015/2016 intake)	306	123	32	53	98
3000 Level (2014/2015 intake)	282	142	38	39	63
4000 Level (2013/2014 intake)	296	130	37	57	72

\*Two batches taken in the same year

It is apparent that the full quota for the specialized programme has been filled each year, with many of the enrolled students graduating at the end of the four years. Drop-out rates have been relatively low. The pass rates and the classes obtained by the students following the BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme since its inception are shown in Table 1.4.

<b>Table 1.4:</b>	The final	results of	of students	following the	e BBAHons	(Accounting)	since its
inception in 20	003						

		Academic Years								
Class	2011/2012	2010/2011	2009/2010	2008/2009	2007/2008	2006/2007	2006/ 2007	2004/2005	2003/2004	2002/2003
First Class	12	10	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	
Second Class Upper Division	38	53	66	76	73	84	71	52	50	27
Second Class Lower Division	17	11	6	18	8	5	9	16	16	14
General Pass	15	43	23	24	22	25	57	66	78	51
Fail	30	3	2	5	-	-	-	-	2	-
Total	112	120	97	123	103	116	137	134	146	92

## Section 2: Observations on the SER

## 2.1 **Preparation of the Self Evaluation Report (SER)**

The SER of the BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme has been well prepared and is in accordance with the guidelines stipulated in the Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions of the UGC. The contents of the SER were presented in a concise and easily comprehensible manner and covered the period 2013 - 2017.

The SER has been prepared by a team appointed by the Faculty Board of FMF and approved by the Senate. The writing team comprised four members; three from the Department of Accounting and Finance and one from the Computer Unit, with a senior member of the faculty functioning as the Chairperson. A participatory approach was evident, with the SER team holding discussions both at the department and faculty levels to address issues and concerns that arose during the writing process. Members of the department were familiarized with the review manual through the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of the faculty. Some academics of the department had undergone training by an expert during the SER preparation process. The eight criteria were assigned to different members of the department who were in charge of identifying, collating and organizing the relevant documents. The final draft of the SER was circulated among members of the faculty for comments. After the finetuning of the document it was sent to the Internal Review team of the University for comments which were then taken into consideration when finalizing the SER. The contributions of both the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) and IQAC to the entire process were significant. The entire department was well versed in the SER process and demonstrated a great degree of commitment and cohesiveness.

#### 2.2 Observations on the SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was conducted and is included in the SER. Some of the identified strengths were verified during the review of documentary evidence and physical inspection. For instance, observations revealed that the FMF and the Department of Accounting and Finance own two new buildings which house lecture theatres, auditoriums, lecturers' office rooms, and IUAC room and provide space for administrative needs. There was, however, lack of evidence pertaining to some of the identified strengths. For example, that "the faculty shares keen interest in undertaking research" was not evident and is not a particular strength of the department as stated in the SER. The weaknesses were identified during the review process.

## 2.3 Previous Reviews Conducted and Action Taken

No subject or programme reviews have been conducted previously on the programmes offered by the FMF. However, the University underwent an Institutional Review (IR) conducted by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) in December 2014, and the steps taken in addressing the identified deficiencies of the faculty are set out in the SER. The Review Panel noted that some of the remedial measures taken were initiated recently.

# **Section 3: The Review Process**

The review process was rigorous and was conducted in several steps. The first was a desk evaluation of the SER, where members of the Review Panel made independent assessments, which was followed by a meeting, preceding the site visit, which were organized by the QAC of the UGC. Here the Review Panel discussed the outcomes of the desk evaluation. Prior to the site visit, a work schedule for the Review Panel was prepared by the Chair and sent to the Dean of the FMF for any required amendments. The finalized site visit schedule (see Annex 1) was circulated among the Review Panel members, the Dean of the FMF and the Chairperson of the IQAC. At the site, the panel had a brief meeting to discuss the review process, before commencing the review.

One of the main tasks of the Review Panel was to observe documentary evidence, for which a substantial time slot was allocated. Additionally, several informal meetings/ discussions were held with groups or persons. Visits were also made for physical verification of the claims. The following sections provide a brief record of the meetings conducted and the facilities observed during the review process. Since the faculty was in session, the review team was also able to observe some of the relevant processes.

## 3.1 Scheduled Meetings and Discussions

During the four days site visit the Review Panel had informal meetings/ discussions with several groups and persons that were directly or indirectly involved with the programme or provided support in one way or another. The following academics and administrative staff were met with during the review visit.

- Vice Chancellor, University of Ruhuna
- Dean, FMF
- Director IQAU
- Chairperson IQAC
- Members of SER team
- Heads of Departments of the FMF
- Academic Staff of the Department of Accounting and Finance (including probationary and temporary staff)
- Programme Coordinators
- Student Counselors
- Members of the Student Union
- CGU members/Collaborators
- Students in all four years of the degree programme
- Support staff Academic / Non-academic (Dept., IT, Library, Hostel)
- Stakeholders
- Recent Graduates

The participation at many of the group discussions was satisfactory. The discussions were interactive and groups were met with separately to provide an opportunity to freely express their thoughts and concerns. The attendance at the above meetings is provided in Annex 2, with some photographs.

# 3.2 Facilities Observed

In addition to these meetings, the Review Panel also made visits to several facilities for physical verification. All members of the Review Panel were present at the discussions and participated in the physical verification process. The facilities inspected are given below.

- Office of the Vice Chancellor
- Office of the Dean
- Administrative block
- Department of Accounting and Finance
- Lecturers' offices
- Library
- Student Canteen
- Auditorium
- Lecture halls
- Study rooms
- Women's Hostel
- Computer labs

# 3.3 Processes Observed

The commitment of the academics towards the review process was clearly evident through the presentation of the documents for each of the eight criteria, which were systematically coded and neatly arranged in a separate room. Labeling and filing of the documents pertaining to each criterion were well organized to facilitate the inspection process, and was in accordance with the SER. The authenticity of the evidence was cross-checked through inspection/ verification and discussion/ clarification. Additional evidence (or missing pieces of evidence) was requested for, on the start of the first day of the Review visit. These documents, where available, were provided without delay. The entire process was coordinated by the chairperson of the IQAC of the FMF who was present in person throughout the visit and coordinated all of the activities efficiently. Academic members were also in attendance throughout the review visit to facilitate easy retrieval of the evidence and to clarify any concerns/ issues. Many informal discussions were also held throughout the visit with the academics and programme coordinators.

A women's hostel and faculty canteen were visited while they were in use. The procedures and the use of the library facilities were also observed. A teaching session was also observed during the review visit. The use of the lecturers' offices and the functioning of the offices of the Dean and Department Head were also observed. Observations were also made of the general cleanliness of the premises and the enthusiasm of the support staff. The surroundings of the university provided the students with a natural and healthy learning environment. Proximity to the sea hastened corrosion which was noted as a drawback.

## **3.4 Outcomes of the Review Process**

At the end of each day of the site visit the Review Panel had several internal meetings to discuss and evaluate the experiences and findings. The desk evaluation scores were re-visited, and amended, where needed, based on the on-site observations. Lengthy discussions were held within the panel before deciding on the deserving scores for each of the sub-criteria. The team also prepared a power point presentation which included comments on the review visit and its facilitation and on the healthy practices adopted and apparent weaknesses of the degree programmes observed by the review panel. Recommendations for improving the programme were also included.

The review visit ended with a de-briefing meeting conducted on the final day, which was attended by the Dean of the FMF, Head and Academic staff of the Department of Accounting and Finance, and the Heads of the other two departments of the faculty. A cordial discussion ensued after the presentation where those present clarified certain matters. The Dean, Head of the Department of Accounting and Finance, and Chairperson of the IQAC commended the efforts of the Review panel and positively commented on the recommendations made by them for the improvement of the reviewed programme.

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

Observations on the SER and those made during the site visit indicated that the Faculty/ Institution took matters relating to maintaining quality seriously. The members of the relevant department as well as those of the faculty/ university recognized the need to obtain feedback from the reviewers on credibility, transparency and effectiveness of the academic programmes and other support services, and were therefore fully aware and appreciative of the importance of the QA process. Internal quality assurance processes are in place and these processes have been followed to a fair extent over the recent past. The Faculty has a well established and efficient Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) which works closely with the University's Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU). Both of these entities effectively carry out their respective duties broadly falling in line with expectations outlined in the Internal Quality Assurance Manual and related circulars put forward by the UGC. Many best practices are now internalized and followed.

One of the key features of the Bachelor of Business Administration Honours in Accounting degree programme that was being reviewed was the high degree of commitment towards presenting facts pertaining to each of the eight criteria. Each sub-criterion was methodically addressed with appropriate evidence being presented, and verification through multiple sources suggested a high level of congruency. The systematic documentation and the degree of enthusiasm towards the review process and the degree of awareness of both the students, academics and non-academics showed that they accepted the review process and were keen on making a good impression. The staff at all levels also received constructive criticism positively demonstrating their openness to feedback and the capacity to improve and change, where required, to address weaknesses. The frequency of involvement at all levels was impressive and many opportunities had been provided for exchange of ideas and for discussion on the SER. It was evident that the department and the faculty worked together towards achieving a common goal of ensuring high quality in both teaching and support activities, to the extent possible.

#### Section 5: Judgment on the Eight Criteria

The following sections provide a detailed account of the Strengths and Healthy Practices adopted and the Weaknesses observed in the execution of the BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme, in relation to the eight evaluation criteria set out in the PR manual.

#### 5.1 Criterion 1: Programme Management

#### **Healthy Practices and Strengths**

The maturity of the department and faculty has grown in leaps and bounds over the past few years. Today it proudly owns a well-equipped, state-of-the-art new building, and more buildings are being constructed. The Department of Accounting and Finance has attracted the highest number of students in the past years in comparison to the other three programmes offered by the faculty. One of the greatest assets of the department is the student-friendly atmosphere and its enthusiastic academic staff being involved in imparting the required knowledge, skills, and competencies. The department regularly holds faculty days (an event open to the students and faculty members) and facilitates many extracurricular activities and outreach programmes such as the "Business Club" with the neighbouring villages, which builds the social capital of the department and the university. There was evidence of a participatory approach being practised by the faculty as well as the department. Student representation was accommodated in faculty committees and student welfare committees. At present, the department has 14 academics who provides adequate strength for the execution of the study programme. The existing human and physical profiles are in place, which ensures that the department has the capacity to effectively manage and deliver its core functions. Records show that the department has adhered to its annual academic calendar, and, though disturbed by periodic student unrest and a non-academic strike, the students were able to complete the BBA degree in Accounting and graduate without much delay. The faculty regularly publishes a handbook for students including essential information, which is distributed among new entrants at the induction. Another best practice adopted by the faculty is that the new entrants must undergo a complete medical checkup prior to the commencement of the study programme. Faculty and Department meetings are held regularly and minutes are systematically recorded. The website of the department is quite attractive, and is equipped with all necessary links. Some academics of the department maintain an online link, giving the learning outcomes, lesson plans and additional reading. They also have provision to upload assignments, which are scrutinized for plagiarism using special software. Timely feedback for assignments is also provided. Many of these systems have been introduced recently and still need to become fully internalized. Peer monitoring and monitoring of the implementation of the study curriculum are conducted through feedback from approved questionnaires, such procedures being well established. However, the responses need to be evaluated objectively and action taken based on the feedback. Graduate satisfaction surveys at exit points, tracer studies, and employability studies are annually

conducted for the whole university, but a mechanism is needed to interpret and make use of the findings for the betterment of the study programme.

One recommendation of the IR conducted by the QAAC in 2014 was to introduce an elearning system. Based on this suggestion, a Learning Management System (LMS) has been introduced recently and used extensively by some academics for the new syllabus which came into effect in 2017. Another perceived need was an annual work plan for the faculty as well as the department, and coordination between IQAU and other faculties and departments to be further strengthened. This suggestion has been taken seriously and, under the guidance of the University's newly established IQAU, the management faculty has established its own IOAC for the faculty. There was evidence of preparing and monitoring work according to a pre-designed template of the IQAU and of regular meetings with the faculty representatives. As we have already said, one of the best practices, or one of the major strengths, we saw was the proper functioning of the IQAU, which is responsible for maintaining quality for the whole university. Under their guidance, the faculty monitors all aspects of the study programme, including the performance of the teaching staff. Though recently initiated, and not yet fully internalized, it is accepted wholeheartedly by all of the staff, which itself is a great achievement. It is commendable that "Quality Assurance" has become a compulsory item on the agenda of the Faculty Board and Senate meetings.

#### Weaknesses

One of the major weaknesses noted is that stakeholder consultation is limited only to student internships. Stakeholder consultation and participatory approaches are lacking where it is most needed – programme design, development and delivery. Student and teacher appraisals, although in place and conducted periodically, have not been systematically analyzed, nor has corrective action been taken for improvement. The department does not have adequate minor staff. The website has to be monitored more regularly.

## 5.2 Criterion 2: Human and Physical Resources

#### **Healthy Practices and Strengths**

As mentioned in the SWOT analysis, one of the major strengths of the department and faculty is the visible student-centred and student-friendly attitudes displayed by all of its members. Harmony and cohesion between the students and staff, and among staff members were praiseworthy. We were informed by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, that his doors are open every Wednesday afternoon for all – students, academics, non-academics and other support staff, without any prior appointment, to discuss and report any concerns or grievances. The faculty and the department have a well-developed strategic plan, which focuses on student-centred teaching and learning. This approach is being tried out with the introduction of the new syllabus which is in operation from 2017. As a Panel, we too observed that the department is using improved infrastructure facilities for teaching and

learning, with the use of well equipped and newly built lecture halls and theatres. Computer labs and a new administrative complex are under construction and would undoubtedly enhance the quality of the programme with the creation of a more interactive teaching and learning environment. Some printed notes were available for selected courses so that students could prepare for the lectures beforehand. In addition to traditional classroom-based teaching and learning, some of the academic staff use the LMS and we hope this new practice will be made use of for all the taught courses by the entire staff. The department at present conducts a four-year special degree programme, and there was evidence of field visits to different management institutions, of workshops and of guest-lectures being incorporated into the curriculum. There were signs of synergy and a high level of enthusiasm among the staff. The new syllabus, though yet to be internalized, is in accordance with the SLFO and Subject Benchmark Statements. If there was wider consultation and input from external resource persons the course could have been further improved. The library is well equipped with books and periodicals, and access is provided to the well-known management journals. Electronic databases, internet facilities, inter-library loans and reprography facilities are available for staff and students. The Career Guidance Unit (CGU) also empowers students with much needed soft skills, although there is still a need to accommodate short courses at more convenient times for the students.

All courses are conducted in the English medium, and we were able to assess that most students of the final year could converse with us in English to a certain degree. In addition to the training provided by the English Language Teaching Sub-unit, (ELTC), the department has employed two resource persons to provide additional assistance in order to improve the proficiency in English of identified weaker students.

It is mandatory for all new academics to undergo an induction programme offered by the Staff Development Center, which is a healthy practice. The staff members also regularly participate in training sessions to improve their knowledge on quality assurance processes. There was evidence to show that the majority of the staff have acquired the required training in outcome-based education and student-centred learning. An internship program is embedded in the curriculum, but the location of the university has made it difficult for students to secure internships at suitable nearby industries/offices, with some having to travel to Colombo and other far off places. Some students suggested the need for additional training to be incorporated.

#### Weaknesses

One of the weaknesses noticed was that only three academics had doctorates, which might pose a challenge when specialized expertise is required for certain subjects. Also, there was only limited evidence of having applied for competitive scholarships/grants for postgraduate studies. It was seen that specialization or expertise of the staff members needs to be upgraded. More recent accounting/statistical software could also be used. Another shortcoming expressed by the students was that their English language skills were limited only to writing, and more self-learning and interactive learning facilities need to be introduced. The human and physical resources profile of the department can be further improved by encouraging those who are yet to obtain their doctoral degrees to do so from well recognized, prestigious universities. The academics should be encouraged to improve their research output by publishing in international or local peer reviewed journals, in addition to their own faculty journal.

## 5.3 Criterion 3: Programme Design and Development

## **Healthy Practices and Strengths**

The BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme currently offered for 1<sup>st</sup> year students is based on the curriculum developed in 2017. Programme design has been initiated by describing well-defined graduate outcomes consistent with the university's vision and mission, which is followed by a clear mapping of course/module outcomes to the programme outcomes. Programme design complies with the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF), and is guided by relevant Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS), and requirements of relevant professional bodies. Curriculum is outcome-driven and equips students with knowledge, skills and attitudes (to some extent) to succeed in the world of work and for lifelong learning. Some training programmes on Outcome Based Education (OBE) and Student Centred Learning (SCL) have been conducted for probationary staff and staff in service. The programme is developed collaboratively in a participatory manner through a curriculum development committee and scrutinised and approved by the IQAU and Senate. The programme seeks to engage students in a variety of learning activities that would encourage diversity, accessibility and autonomy of learning (industrial visits, clinics internship, and dissertations).

## Weakness

The existing BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme offered for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students is based on the curriculum developed in 2013. Programme design then, was not developed using programme/ course outcomes consistent with the University's vision and mission. A clear mapping of course/module outcomes to the programme outcomes was not available. OBE and SCL have not been fully internalised by all the staff. Neither the 2013 nor the 2017 programme designs are flexible in terms of entry and exit pathways including fallback options. There is a lack of participation of outside experts in programme design.

## 5.4 Criterion 4: Course/ Module Design and Development

## **Healthy Practices and Strengths**

Courses are designed according to approved policies and procedures of CDC, IQAC, IQAU and the Senate. The courses are designed in compliance with the SLQF credit definition and guided by other reference points such as SBS. The department has recently

established a mechanism to improve courses to enhance learning outcomes and achievements of students through regular monitoring and review processes (student feedback and peer evaluation). Recent course design and development (2017) takes into account student-centred teaching strategies enabling the students to be actively engaged in their own learning.

#### Weaknesses

The main weakness is that there is a lack of participation of external subject experts in course design and development. Furthermore, although survey tools such as questionnaires for course evaluation, student feedback and student satisfaction surveys have recently been developed and used (since 2017), there is no evidence of analyses or remedial actions being taken.

## 5.5 Criterion 5: Teaching and Learning

## **Healthy Practices and Strengths**

The department is striving towards achieving student-centred teaching and learning in-line with OBE. The staff are provided training on OBE and they possess a web based LMS (blended learning) to improve the quality of the learning experience of students, while actively engaging students in the learning process thereby enabling them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Student representation on faculty committees and student welfare committees is adequate. All incoming students are provided with adequate information on the curricula of the study programme(s) and courses offered, examination procedures and grading mechanisms, requirements for graduation and examination By-laws. The faculty offers a well structured orientation programme for all new students to facilitate students' transition from 'school' to 'university' environment.

#### Weaknesses

Only a few staff members integrate appropriate research and scholarly activities of their own/others' and current knowledge in the public domain into teaching. Research output is inadequate at present (other than that of a few staff members). Only a limited number of collaborative research, between staff and students is carried out and published in journals. Options available to exit at different levels, optional courses and electives offered are very limited. Inventory of ICT facilities are inadequate. Although feedback from stakeholders has been received recently, there is no evidence for taking remedial measures. Feedback (staff and students) although conducted is still not systematically analyzed; no evidence of utilizing feedback for continuous development of teaching and learning processes

#### 5.6 Criterion 6: Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression

#### **Healthy Practices and Strengths**

The student-friendly environment created by the academic and support staff is seen to be conducive to both teaching and learning. The programme recognizes, and caters to, the needs of weaker students, and satisfactory measures have been put in place for counselling, providing medical support and hostel facilities, etc. to provide a caring, safe and effective learning environment. Needs assessments have been conducted through tracer surveys, and feedback from new graduates has been collected. The induction/orientation programmes are well structured and designed to incorporate a series of components which are intended to introduce the available support facilities such as library resources, medical centre facilities, and student/career counselling. The By-laws are provided to the students. The University has a Code of Conduct (Student Charter) which is made available to the new entrants well before the commencement of the programme. The mentors that are allocated to new entrants, with their friendly demeanour, provide re-assurance to the new students during transition from school to university life. Self-directed learning is enhanced through the ready support offered by the Student Counsellors and Proctors, who are periodically trained. The Student Counsellors are friendly and maintain a good rapport with the students through regular meetings, and they are committed to the task. There was also some evidence of constant monitoring of these support systems - e.g. dengue prevention committee meetings, canteen committee meetings. The library is well organized and digitalized, and the students are familiarized with the facility through a specifically designed session conducted during the orientation programme. IT staff are knowledgeable and friendly. Steps to improve ICT facilities are underway. The academics have periodically undergone training offered by the SDC. The records of progressive performance of students are systematically maintained by the faculty. Feedback from students is collected regularly and is administered by the Faculty office to ensure confidentiality. The students are informed of the selection criteria for specialization through the web and handbook. Feedback from students on courses is collected regularly and is administered by the Faculty office to ensure confidentiality. Some opportunities are provided for exchange of ideas and collaborative learning through discussions at the Business Clinic and the Study Circles. The relationship between staff and students is enhanced by increasing opportunities for interaction. The Faculty Day is set aside in the academic calendar and includes games and 'talent shows' involving both staff and students. Wednesday afternoons have been set-aside for student activities. Co-curricular activities including sports and cultural activities are fostered by incorporating such activities into the academic calendar and providing opportunities for students to participate. The CGU in the University is active and offers some programmes to improve the personality and employability of the graduates. Students undergo internship training as a mandatory requirement. The sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cell is now established. The Student Request Committee takes timely action when grievances of students are reported, and pro-active measures are taken through counselling. The University has taken a recent initiative to establish an Alumni Association.

#### Weaknesses

Although the library facilities are satisfactory, the use of the available resources by the students needs to be increased. Evidence of the use of more up-to-date software is still lacking and more ICT based teaching (e.g. for statistics) must be incorporated into course modules. No permanent measures have been put in place to accommodate the needs of differently abled students, although temporary measures are adopted in response to student requests. Feedback from students is not systematically analyzed and therefore is of limited use in terms of revising teaching and learning practices. No fall back options are available within the present system. The capacity for the CGU to offer programmes to the different faculties is limited due to clashes and restrictions of the academic calendars. The course units offered by the CGU are currently not mandatory. Both these factors have prevented optimal participation by the students. Internship and dissertation are included in the same semester which has prevented students from gaining optimal use of these two modules. Only limited opportunities are available for internship. The activities of the SGBV cell are yet to be regularized. Female participation as office bearers in the student union is limited. As reported no physical ragging incidents have been recorded over the last few years. However, there was some evidence of intimidation of the students. There is only limited use of the on-line complaint system. Alumni are still not actively involved in campus activities.

#### 5.7 Criterion 7: Student Assessment and Awards

#### **Healthy Practices and Strengths**

The faculty has established several standard procedures in designing and conducting assessments to ensure fairness to students and reliability, confidentiality and validity of the processes. The examination By-laws are comprehensive and are made available to all students. An examination manual has been prepared. Efforts to align intended learning outcomes to assessment methods were evident. The process followed in designing, approving and monitoring assessment strategies are reasonably rigorous. A system has been recently put in place to check for plagiarism in dissertations to ensure credibility. The weightage of the different components of the assessment has been set and is communicated to the students in time through the handbook and web. Due process is followed when appointing setters, moderators and examiners. The staff were seen to be competent to undertake the relevant assessments and 'conflict of interests' is avoided. There was evidence to suggest that temporary arrangements are made, when needed, to cater to the needs of students suffering from physical disabilities. Repeat examinations are permitted. Results are released in a timely manner - the first marking is done within the first month after the examination, the second marking in the second month, and results are released within three months. These dates are duly notified to the students well before the examination. As reported to us, results and feedback on assignments and mid-term assessments are provided before the final examination. First and second marking is conducted, and results are finalized at an Examination Board meeting. Marking schemes are made available to the examiners and are

strictly followed to ensure transparency and consistency in the marking process. They have an examination manual. The degree Certificate comply with requirements of the UGC. Two transcripts are offered, one by the faculty and the other by the university, the latter incorporating the Grade Point Average obtained by the student. The name of the degree and the degree awarded complies with the SLFQ. Students are made aware, through the handbook /web and other guidelines, of the punishments for examination offences.

#### Weaknesses

There was a mismatch between the practice followed by the faculty (results released within three months of the examination), and that given in the guidelines of the University (stated as two months). However, it was reported that, due to impracticality, the faculty had obtained approval for three months. Subject benchmarks statements must be made use of to a greater extent in designing assessment strategies. The special selection criteria, which is at present based only on the marks attained by students in the first year, second semester examinations is not satisfactory and must be revised in order to be fair to the students. There was only limited evidence of periodic revision of assessment strategies. One of the main weaknesses of the assessment procedure was the absence of regular input from external examiners, with grading being done mostly by internal staff. External examiner reports were therefore unavailable. There were notable inconsistencies in the format of final written examinations in terms of the number of questions and the marks allocated, which is not a healthy practice. There was little evidence of student feedback being used for revising or improving assessment strategies. Repeat attempts are not shown in the transcript.

#### 5.8 Criterion 8: Innovative and Healthy Practices

## **Healthy Practices and Strengths**

The faculty and department have in place some strategies that foster innovative and healthy practices which have led to enhancing of the learning experiences of the students. There was evidence for the establishment of an appropriately designed ICT-based platform (LMS) that facilitates multi-mode delivery which has been extensively used by some for nearly a year. The department offers mandatory internship which enriches practical experience and thereby the quality of the programme. The scope of industrial links with regard to internships has grown over the years. Activities such as the 'Business Clinic' demonstrate some community engagement. The university has a reward system in place for academics. There are several categories of Vice Chancellor's awards based on different criteria focusing on research accomplishments and outreach activities, and including an award for young academics (below 40 years of age). The curriculum incorporates a research project and some flexibility is allowed in the selection of the topics. The department offers two income generating programmes – Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Business Management (MGM), the former being more popular. Some co-curricular activities are offered by the CGU and a certificate course of 9 modules (equivalent to 9 Credits) which

could be taken by the students over the four years is proposed. There is a satisfactory level of student participation in National/ International competitions, particularly in sports. Sound procedures are followed for curriculum design and approval, and for first and second marking. Academic standards have been monitored in the recent past and there is a high degree of compliance by the faculty members. The programme currently allows five repeat attempts within the stipulated time frame.

#### Weaknesses

The use of open educational resources (OER) was very limited. The collaboration of the academics in research and development activities is limited, and therefore incorporation of these elements to undergraduate teaching was also low. The majority of the staff does not demonstrate strong enthusiasm in engaging in research and have hence not shown academic excellence in terms of research output. The quality of dissertations could be improved in terms of depth and language, and very few result in communications or publications. There are limited opportunities for the students to seek internships in leading organizations. The exposure of interns can be increased through stronger links with leading organizations. The internship coincides with the writing of the dissertation and this limits full engagement in onthe-job training. Apart from the internship programme, there was only limited evidence of international and national collaborations of staff members. There is no Credit Transfer Policy at the faculty/ university at present. The management of the MBA and MGM has been transferred from the FMF to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and this loss of autonomy has discouraged teaching staff. The participation of students in CGU activities is limited and must be improved. There was no evidence of action having been taken on feedback for curriculum revision. Input of external experts in programme design and or assessment was not evident. No exit points are included within the four year degree programme.

# Section 6: Grading of Overall Performance of the Programme

Based on the guidelines given in Chapter 3 of the PR manual, the Review Panel's evaluation of the performance of the degree programmeis given in Table 5.1

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No	Criteria	Weightage	Weighted minimum score	Raw Marks	Actual criteria- wise score
01	Programme Management	150	75	62	115
02	Human and Physical Resources	100	50	29	81
03	Programme Design and Development	150	75	53	110
04	Course / Module Design and Development	150	75	43	113
05	Teaching and Learning	150	75	40	105
06	Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression	100	50	60	83
07	Student Assessment and Awards	150	75	44	129
08	Innovative and Healthy Practices	50	25	28	33
	Total on a thousand scale				769
	%				77
	Grade				В

Table 5.1: Raw and actua	l criteria-wise scores	and the final grade
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Based on the evaluation of the performance in relation to the eight criteria, the BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme of the Faculty of Management and Finance of the University of Ruhuna obtained an overall score of **77 per cent**. The actual criteria-wise scores for all the criteria exceeded the weighted minimum score. Therefore, the overall grading of the degree programmeis "**B**" with a performance descriptor "Good". The score indicates a satisfactory level of accomplishment in terms of the quality of the reviewed programme but requires improvement in a few aspects.

# **Section 7: Commendations and Recommendations**

The following section lists some of the commendable practices that are currently incorporated into administrative processes as well as into the teaching and learning methodologies used in the BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme offered by the FMF of the University of Ruhuna. Recommendations are also made to increase the overall quality of the programme.

## Commendations

- Programme management due procedures/ policies have been put in place (many relatively recently).
- Information is conveyed to the students in a timely manner.
- Commitment & dedication high among staff members and as observed there was cohesion & harmony among the academics.
- A friendly and safe environment is created for the students (e.g. medical facilities).
- Community outreach programmes are conducted regularly.
- QA unit & cell have recently been established and is progressing well. Through this many credible practices have been initiated and established and are accepted by the staff (e.g. Performance Appraisals of staff).
- Steps have been taken to establish a GEE cell.
- Teaching methods have been diversified to some extent.
- LMS is impressive and usage is high for 2018.
- Staff adequate & workloads are equitably distributed.
- Timely delivery of results, satisfactory examination procedures adopted. An exam manual has been prepared.
- Staff are satisfied with the facilities available in the new building.
- Students are content with the available infrastructure facilities lecture halls, IT labs, hostels etc. from 2017.
- Student counseling and support is at a satisfactory level, student requests are addressed.
- A positive contribution is made by the CGU towards ensuring the holistic wellbeing of students.
- Cultural/ religious harmony among students is inculcated and facilitated through regular activities.
- Student-staff interactions are facilitated and maintained e.g. Faculty Day and other joint activities.
- Satisfactory orientation/ induction programmes are conducted for new entrants.

• As reported by both staff, student counselors and students, ragging issues were not significant.

## Recommendations

- Increase flexibility through introducing elective courses and allowing wider choice (other than the four streams of specialization).
- Selection criteria for specialization can be improved at least considering the performance in years 1 and 2.
- Incorporation of more practical experience, particularly in accounting.
- Business Mathematics and Statistics to be offered as separate courses.
- Specialized/ difficult subjects should be offered in the second year.
- More recent software packages (e.g. E-views/ Stata) must be introduced.
- Introducing useful/ interesting courses that impart soft skills as a mandatory requirement – CGU can take the lead.
- Provide incentives that would encourage students to follow CGU courses e.g. foreign language courses.
- Establish a CG cell (at present a representative only) within the faculty to facilitate better coordination.
- Improve the incorporation of external input as curriculum reviewers, visiting scholars, external examiners.
- The department to lure more academics to pursue doctoral studies.
- Staff to be encouraged to apply for competitive scholarships, and also to specialize in areas that are being taught in the department.
- Papers to be consistent in format.
- Learning outcomes for all lessons should be provided and aligned to OBE.
- Feedback to be analyzed and revision undertaken regularly.
- Increasing research output urging staff/students to publish in international or local peer reviewed journals/ international local symposia, other than in those of your own university.
- Postgraduate research to be improved and incorporated in course content/ undergraduate teaching.
- Increase non-academic support– filling cadre positions and getting additional positions as required.
- Department representatives must be appointed to the web management committee.
- Other matters facilities for disabled students, credit transfer policy, etc. should be considered.

# **Section 8: Summary**

The review process of the BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme offered by the Department of Accounting and Finance of the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna, was successfully completed. The review process comprised pre-visit evaluation and discussions based on the submitted SER, followed by a site visit (13 - 16 August 2018). The site visit consisted of discussions and meetings with academics and both academic and non-academic support staff who are directly or indirectly linked to the degree programmeunder review. Discussions with students of the degree programme as well as with members of student-based societies provided the Review Panel with invaluable insight on the implementation of the degree programme. The review panel also engaged in a physical inspection tour to observe available resources and processes.

The SER was fairly comprehensive and well prepared and the documentary evidence was systematically organized to facilitate the review process. Overall, a high level of enthusiasm was shown by the academic staff and non-academic staff. The staff showed a high level of commitment towards students, in both teaching and carrying out administrative functions. The students, overall, were well informed about the degree programme and the facilities available for them within the university. The level of English of the students that were interviewed was satisfactory. However, improvement of the written and oral skills in English of the weak students is necessary. Internship training is also supportive. Efforts have been made to improve the soft skills of students. Staff are friendly and deliver academic programmes in a timely and organized manner. Participatory approaches were regularly followed and the cohesiveness of the staff and students was apparent. For these reasons, perhaps, the BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme has maintained its popularity over the years. The student-centred approach of the staff (starting from the VC) is clearly evident. The environment in the department, faculty, and the university at large was safe, pleasant, clean, and conducive to both teaching and learning.

Accordingly, based on the findings of the Review Panel on the stipulated requirements of the eight broad criteria, the BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme was awarded a Grade B, which implies a satisfactory level of accomplishment of the expected quality of the degree programme. The healthy practices and strengths of the programme as well as the identified weaknesses have been detailed out in Section 4 of this report. Commendations as well as recommendations for improvement are given in Section 7.

The BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme has been running for over a decade and therefore, we see some maturity in terms of its routine activities and operational procedures. Many healthy practices have been put in place with the most recent revision (2017), but are yet to be internalized. As pointed out, there is always room for improvement, particularly in terms of flexibility offered to the students, incorporation of external input at varying stages and the improvement of research output. We are sure that if these measures are duly addressed, and the mechanisms that have been put in place are internalized to a greater

extent, the BBAHons (Accounting) degree programme has the prospects of becoming one of leading programmes offered by the Faculty of Management and Finance (FMF) in the University of Ruhuna

The review team wishes to appreciate and acknowledge the cooperation and support extended by the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Heads of Departments, Heads of the Centers and Units, Director IQAC, Chairperson IQAC, SER writing team and all academic and non-academic staff members and students, graduates and industrialists who extended their support and so facilitated the work of the Review Panel.

# Annex 1: Site visit schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY					
	Day 1: 13/08/2018					
8.00 - 8.45 am	Meeting with Vice Chancellor/Deputy Vice Chancellor					
8.45 - 9.15 am	Meeting with IQAU Director/Chair- IQAC					
9.15 - 9.45 am	Meeting with Dean of the Faculty					
9.45 -10.45 am	Meeting with Academic Heads of Departments					
10.45 - 11.00 am	Tea break					
11.00 - 12.00 noon	Meeting with Academic staff members					
12.00 - 1.00 pm	Reviewing documentary evidence					
1.00 - 2.00 pm	Lunch					
2.00 - 2.45 pm	Meeting with the Students Union					
2.45 - 3.00 pm	Tea break					
3.00 - 4.00 pm	Department Tour					
	Day 2: 14/08/2018					
8.00 - 9.00 am	Observing teaching/learning sessions relevant to program					
9.00 - 9.30 am	Meeting with Administrative Staff of Faculty of relevant program					
9.30 - 10.00 am	Meeting with Support Staff of the department (Non-academic/Instructors)					
10.00 – 10.30 am	Meeting with Student Counselors					
10.30 - 10.45 am	Tea break					
10.45 - 12.00 noon	Meeting with students (1 - 4 <sup>th</sup> years)					
12.00 - 1.00 pm	Observing teaching and other physical facilities & discussions with relevant staff					
1.00 - 2.00 pm	Lunch					
2.00 - 4.00  pm	Reviewing documentary evidence					
	Day 3: 15/08/2018					
8.00 - 10.00 am	Reviewing documentary evidence					
10.00 – 10.15 am	Tea break					
10.15 – 10.30 am	Meeting with Library staff, IT unit staff					
10.30 – 11.00 am	Meeting with most recently passed out graduates					
11.00 am - 1.00 pm	Reviewing documentary evidence					
1.00 – 2.00 pm	Lunch					
2.00 – 2.30 pm	Reviewing documentary evidence					
2.30 – 3.00 pm	Meeting with CGU committee/Collaborators for Internship programmes					
3.00 – 4.00 pm	Reviewing documentary evidence					

	Day 4: 16/08/2018
8.00- 10.00 am	Review Panel meeting
10.00- 10.30 am	Tea break
10.30- 11.30 am	Review Panel meeting/Meeting with Probationary Lecturer
11.30- 12.30 am	De-briefing
12.30 - 1.30 pm	Lunch
	Departure

# Annex 2: Evidence of meetings/discussions

Photographs of meetings/discussions









# Attendance Sheets

#### Program Review - 2018 (Site Visit) Faculty of Mangement and Finance University of Ruhuna

#### **Attendance Sheet**

Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor Date: 13/08/2018

No.	Name	Designation/Affliation	Signature
1	Snr. Prof. Gamini Senanayake	Vice Chancelor, UoR	Sr. !!
2	Prof. Mayuri R. Wijesinghe	Chair-Review Team	May- by 7h
3	Prof. Theodore Fernando	Member-Review Team	there fred
4	Dr. Ratnam Vijayakumaran	Member-Review Team	R.W.
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#### Program Review - 2018 (Site Visit) Faculty of Mangement and Finance University of Ruhuna

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#### Program Review - 2018 (Site Visit) Faculty of Mangement and Finance University of Ruhuna

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2	Prof. Theodore Fernando	Member-Review Team	three o
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1	Prof. Mayuri R. Wijesinghe	Chair-Review Team	Map Ly the
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28.	B.V.C.D. Rodnigo	Mf   2016 / 4596	Chathumi
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4.	Sujeena Vidanagamage	Career Caunselor	- Cý
5.	M. Thedushika De Silve		Solesika
6.	A.C. Kaninaratuci	Director / CColl	elie
Ł	A.C. Kansuaratua D.o. P.P Someran	1 manzemet	
8.	Nimali Hewage.	Asiri Hoppital Accountant	Auter.
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	14/ AS 2013		Time: <u>215-101</u> 5
No.	Name	Designation/Affliation	Signature
1	Prof. Mayuri R. Wijesinghe	Chair-Review Team	Mychysh
2	Prof. Theodore Fernando	Member-Review Team	Assur P
3	Dr. Ratnam Vijayakumaran	Member-Review Team	Rettil
4	Mr. KAN Kumarc	AR FMF	
\$		Computer App. Assistant	R. K. welahefti
6	Chandi Menaka	Clerk/Deta E. Op.	CLE
7	S.S. Jayaweera	clerk (III)	At
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	riefing Meeting 16.08.2018		Time: 11.30-12.30
No.	Name	Designation/Affliation	Signature
1	Prof. Mayuri R. Wijesinghe	Chair-Review Team	Mayo, hyzla
2	Prof. Theodore Fernando	Member-Review Team	There Foo
3	Dr. Ratnam Vijayakumaran	Member-Review Team	R. Vires
	De. TELW Gusanorle	Dan/FMF	
4.	Dr. M. w. Indram	Sensor Lecturer	cmess
R.	M.S. Nanayaklarg	γь	(A)
6.	G. A. W. Rarchi	le is	A.
7.	D. Samaranickvama	Lecturer (prob)	It and
8.	A. M. C. Hashini	Temporary Lecturer	Choi
9.	A. G. Deepal	Genior Lecturer G:	Auf.
10.	H.A. C. Jeewanth	Benior Lectures	C. Jeenstri-
11.	G.K. Chirath Jeewantha	Lecturer	1.55
12.	K G P V Gunarith	Senior lectures	Count
13	H.V.J.I Abeywickow		
K	GIPK NI'shadi	HRAd (Marketi	a g

No.	Name	Designation/Affliation	Signature
5	T.M.A Tennakoon	Head/Acc	AL.
5	M. B. F. Mafasiya	Head / Managenand	Feren
17	T.M.A Termakoon M.B.F. Mafasiya Dr. M.K. Wannforde	if Semorleic,	Denc All
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6	AR. S.F.		
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