



PROGRAM REVIEW 2017

University of Jaffna
Faculty of Arts
General Degree



Programme Review Report

General Degree Programme



**Faculty of Arts
University of Jaffna
Thirunelvely
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Programme Review Team

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CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter 1 - Programme Review Process	4
Chapter 2 - Brief Introduction to the Programme	6
Chapter 3 - Review Team's Observations on the Self Evaluation Report	8
Chapter 4 - Overview of the Faculty's Approach to Quality and Standards	9
Chapter 5 - Judgment on the Eight Criteria of Programme Review	11
5.1 Programme Management	11
5.2 Human and Physical Resources	12
5.3 Programme Design and Development	14
5.4 Course/ Module Design and Development	15
5.5 Teaching and Learning	16
5.6 Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression	18
5.7 Student Assessment and Awards	21
5.8 Innovative and Healthy Practices	22
Chapter 6 - Grading of Overall Performance of the programme	25
Chapter 7 - Commendations and Recommendations	26
Chapter 8 – Summary	28
Appendix I	29

Chapter 1: Programme Review Process

This report presents the findings of the programme review (PR) conducted at the Faculty of Arts (FoA), University of Jaffna (UoJ), from 11th to 13th of September 2017 under the guidance of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) of the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka (UGC). The programme review process evaluates the quality of education within a specific study program. Thus, this PR focuses on the Bachelor of Arts (BA) General Degree Programme (GDP) of FoA of UoJ. The review process is focused on evaluating the quality of students' learning experience, where the responsibility of maintaining quality and standards lies with the programme managers of the institution.

The PR process was conducted according to the guidelines given in the Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions, published by the UGC in July 2015. The FoA, UoJ submitted a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) that consist of an introduction, the process of writing SER, and a self-assessment on eight criteria, namely; programme management, human and physical resources, programme design and development, course design and development, teaching and learning, learning environment, student support and progression, and student assessment and awards. The quality of the study program was reviewed based on the evidence provided in the SER and ground realities witnessed by various means by the PR review panel during the site visit.

As an essential part of the review process, the review panel members reviewed the SER thoroughly and sent their desk review results, including the marks given for each criterion, to the Director/QAAC on an individual basis. It was a transparent process, and then they met at the UGC to synthesize each reviewer's facts and findings. Then, the review panel visited all departments in the FoA from 11th to 13th September, 2017 under the direct coordination of the QAAC. The agenda of the three day visit was prepared by the chairman of the review panel and circulated among the other review team and relevant authorities in the UoJ and the final Programme Schedule is attached herewith (see Appendix I).

The evaluation of eight criteria was based on:

- Meetings held with Director of the QAAC of the UGC of Sri Lanka;
- Vice Chancellor of the UoJ, Dean of the FoA, Director of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), Heads of Department, Coordinator of the faculty Quality Assurance cell, academic staff, non-academic staff, library staff of the university, Deputy registrar / examinations, Deputy Registrar of the faculty, Chief Student Counsellor, Student Counsellors of the faculty, Director/Career Guidance Unit, Director/Sports, staff of ELTU, and some undergraduate students;
- Observation of physical facilities in each Department, lecture rooms of the Faculty and departments, the faculty computer center, University libraries, etc.;

- A discussion with SER writing team;
- Reviewing research publications and available documents at the Department; and
- Reviewing all documentary evidence furnished related to the GDP, allowing the reviewers to further clarify certain points at the ground level.

Each of the eight fold criteria was judged as very good, good, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory, based on qualities such as openness, strengths, good practices, and weaknesses in each. At the end of site visit, the review panel briefed the Dean of the Faculty, Heads of departments and academic staff members, to conclude the review process.

The review panel was accompanied by a member who could read and speak the Tamil language well, allowing the team to communicate with all relevant individuals during the review visit. Among the team members Prof. (Mrs.) S. Ramesh, Dr. S. Srikanthan, and Mr. S. Kabilan gave substantial ground support at the time of the site visit by the review panel.

Chapter 2: Brief Introduction to the Programme

The GDP is one of the oldest programmes offered by the FoA, UOJ. This programme has been offered for the last 43 years, starting from the inception of the UOJ in 1974 to up to today (2017), and has survived through most of the ethno-national tensions, conflicts and wars. This traditional evolution of the programme has its own merits and demerits and the current programme review has been an opportunity for both internal and external parties to look at the programme critically and rethink the future shape of the programme.

The FoA includes 137 academic staff members, who comprise 16 professors (2 Senior Professors, 9 Professors, and 5 Associate Professors), 71 Senior Lectures, and 43 probationary lecturers. In addition to these permanent academic positions the team observed that there are many temporary assistant lecturers in each department contributing significantly to the academic activities. Among the academic staff members, 42% had PhD qualifications earned locally or from foreign countries. Most of the academic staff members are drawn from the Jaffna Peninsula and 42% of them are females.

Though this is the first time the GDP has been reviewed, the faculty had undergone a subject review earlier. Fourteen out of sixteen departments have been reviewed by QAAC subject review panels during the period 2005-2010, a fact that was highlighted in the meetings conducted with the academic staff members during the present review process. The academic staff members, Heads of the departments and the Dean of the faculty considered the current review of GDP as an opportunity for them to rethink and restructure the degree programme in line with the similar programmes offered in other state universities in Sri Lanka.

The GDP includes 20 disciplines except translations studies. The disciplines included in the degree programme are Archaeology, Christian Civilization, Drama and Theatre Arts, Economics, English Language Teaching, English Literature, Fine Arts, Geography, Hindu culture, Hindu Philosophy, History, Home Economics, Information and Communication Technology, Linguistics, Media Studies, Philosophy, Planning, Political Science, Psychology, Sanskrit, Sociology and, Tamil. All subjects (disciplines) except Media Studies, Home Economics, Information and Communication Technology and English as a second language have been reviewed in the year 2009.

After completion of the first year, the students can either enrol in an honours degree programme or stay in the general degree program. Those who obtain a Grade Point Average (GPA) above 3.0 at the end of the first year are eligible to be selected to

honours degree programmes while the rest of the students who cannot secure a GPA above this cut-off, or those who obtain said GPA but opt not to, can enrol in the GDP.

The GDP requires three years of studies spread throughout six semesters (a semester consists of 15 weeks of studies) and students have to complete 90 credits worth courses. The students cover 24 credits in the first year, 33 credits each in the second and third years. The structure of the GDP is such that the students are expected to pursue only two disciplines (subjects) during the 2nd and 3rd years, which is an extraordinary practice compared to similar programmes offered in the arts faculties of other state universities in Sri Lanka. The FoA, UoJ does not have courses specifically designed for a GDP program with distinctive course codes, titles, and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and assessment methods and criteria that match with those of level 5 of the SLQF, which guide students to achieve competencies at that level. In the FoA of UoJ the GDP students are asked to take some of the courses offered to honours degree students without trying to achieve a predetermined graduate profile in the GDP. This is not a healthy and academically sound practice as observed by the review team. The GDP consists of various course units such as a) principle subjects, b) auxiliary courses, 3) interfaculty elective courses. The principle subjects are also of two types, namely, core course units and elective course units. In the meantime, the auxiliary courses too have two types, course units having credit values and course units having no credit values. To be eligible for the BA degree in Arts students must earn a minimum of 42 credits in core course units of a principle subject. The assessment of the courses is done in two components: in-course assessment (40%) and final examination (60%).

The FoA has taken initiatives to improve English and ICT skills of the students with the support of the English Language Teaching (ELTU) and Information and Communication Technology (ICTU) units. The students must compulsorily follow courses on Social Harmony, Basic Sciences and ICT in the first-year. Obtaining a credit pass for ESL (English as a second language) is compulsory for all students to fulfil the requirement of the general degree but students who are following English literature and ELTU as main subjects should choose Basic French. More progressively, the FoA permits the students to select course units from other faculties as elective course unit to develop inter-disciplinary learning.

Chapter 3: Review Team's Observations on the Self Evaluation

Following the guidance received from the QAAC and the UGC, the UoJ has prepared its Internal Quality Enhancement Policy Framework (IQEPF) and the University Council has approved it on 28 May, 2016. The IQEPF provides all necessary legal provisions to establish an Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) for the university and an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) for each faculty. The SER was prepared under the purview of IQAC of FoA.

The SER has been prepared by a four-member team (Prof. (Mrs.) S. Ramesh, Dr. S. Srikanthan, Mr. S. Kabilan, and Mrs. K. Navakulan) under supervision of the Dean and the coordinator of IQAC, FoA. As highlighted in Appendix I of the SER, a Steering Committee has been established for the preparation of all SERs in this second round of the quality assurance review process of the QAAC. The Steering Committee chaired by the Dean has met on 02 May 2017. The entire process of preparation of the SER has followed the milestones scheduled by the Chairman (Dean/FoA) of the Steering Committee. The milestones scheduled are listed in Table 01.

Table 01: Key Milestones Scheduled by the Steering Committee

S.N	Milestones	Date/Duration
1	Meeting with all heads and steering committee members	05 May 2017
2	Inform the faculty members	09 May 2017
3	Meeting with 8 sub committees	12 May 2017
4	Data collection	15 May 2017 – 19 May 2017
5	Data processing	20 May 2017 – 26 May 2017
6	Submission of reports by 8 groups	31 May 2017
7	SER writing for each cluster	01 June 2017 – 15 June 2017
8	Finalizing the draft SER	20 June 2017
9	Presentation	20 June 2017 – 29 June 2017
10	Submit the report to VC and UGC	30 June 2017

The review panel observes that the leadership given by the Dean to complete the SER, FoA is remarkable.

As highlighted in Chapter 1, following the desk review, the review panel met at the pre-site visit meeting at the UGC and identified gaps and weak areas of the SER that need to be probed during the site visit.

Chapter 4: Overview of the Faculty's Approach to Quality and Standards

The UoJ established an IQAU in 2013 under a Director, and the FoA has established an IQAC with relevant by-laws in 2016, with a Chairperson / coordinator (Prof (Mrs). S. Ramesh). Since then the IQAC has conducted graduate exit surveys, and tools have been developed for peer evaluation. With a late notification coming from the University (27th April 2017), the Faculty IQAC has commenced preparations for the programme review in April 2017. The IQAU has conducted workshops targeting quality assurance and enhancement for staff, including those of the Faculty of Arts. However, the amount of work that has been done could be considered as limited during this short time span. Recently, internal quality assurance has been paid attention, and currently some good practices have been built into the day-to-day activities. The reviewers are confident that the Faculty could continue on these lines establishing a quality culture within the Faculty.

ICT based platforms are currently being established and used by some disciplines. A considerable amount of research is undertaken by the Faculty but limited resources both human (academic grades) and physical are limiting factors to achieve more. Community and industry collaborations could be enhanced to support these achievements. Further, the establishment of an effective appraisal and reward system may encourage more academics to excel in these areas. The Faculty's attempt to promote student and staff engagement in a considerable number of co-curricular activities could be commended. However, their participation at regional/national level events (both academic and extracurricular) could be improved. The Faculty engage in almost all these activities having the honours degree programmes (HDP) in focus and specific attention is not paid to the GDP. The Faculty needs to pay due attention to the GDP and improve its performance and quality in all aspects, producing high quality graduates relevant to the development of the country.

In general, a general degree (GDP) specific curriculum should be developed considering all relevant curriculum determinants. It should be outcome based (OB) to achieve a well-defined graduate profile. Relevant courses should be designed, and the content, teaching-learning approaches, and assessment tasks should be constructively aligned to achieve the program outcomes. More effective student-centered learning strategies should be incorporated. An undergraduate research activity, an industrial training / internship, and other self-centered learning strategies could be included in the GDP. The low attention to the general degree program could be attributed to running a large number of discipline-based HDPs by the Faculty with limited human and physical resources. Only a limited amount of external funds has been raised in the past and that

too is mainly as sponsorships and sales of students' productions. The opportunities for an effective and organized credit-transfer system is almost absent.

Although it was not possible for the review team to satisfactorily profile the commitment of non-academic staff members due to a trade union action staged during the review visit, a satisfactory proportion of the academic staff was available (many were on A/L examination duties), and a few administrative officers who were available such as the Assistant Registrar of the Faculty and the Deputy Registrar of the Examination Branch of the University exhibited a very high level of commitment and awareness in quality enhancement and excellence. However, the Faculty may need to take action to raise the level of commitment of the staff in general with regard to ensuring quality in all its functions. The review team could not meet many students or observe real teaching and student activities happening during the visit as it was the students' vacation. However, the Faculty arranged a meeting with a few students.

Chapter 5: Judgment on the Eight Criteria of Programme Review

5.1 Programme Management

In relation to programme management, among the 27 standards, none achieves a score of 3, 17 standards achieve a score of 2 indicating adequate quality with a few issues about the quality in relation to those standards, 8 standards achieve a score of 1 indicating major issues in either the quality maintained in relation to those standards or the strength of evidence provided, and 2 achieve a score of 0 indicating inadequate quality or irrelevant evidence provided. Much of the evidence provided was not at the programme level (GDP), and was either irrelevant or inadequate.

The Faculty has adopted certain standards only in the later part of the year 2016 or in mid 2017. Perhaps, as the Faculty does not have a separate focus on the GDP, adequate evidence specific to the GDP may not have been available. However, with the implementation of a separate curriculum for the GDP, the Faculty should be able to rectify these issues. The programme achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 42 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 78 out of 150.

Evidence was inadequate on local organizational structure and function such as faculty-level by-laws and guidelines (in relation to examinations, examination offences, student discipline, and student unions or students' access to those), SOPs, ToRs of faculty-level standing and *ad hoc* committees, and audit reports. As there is no unit or department responsible for the GDP, an agenda item in the meetings of the Faculty Board to discuss the issues of the GDP would be appreciated. Although some actions were taken to enhance quality, there was no evidence on monitoring and progress evaluation of the effectiveness of implementation or modifications through stakeholder feedback on almost all matters. No evidence was noted of any appointed monitoring committees, nor evidence of taking action to rectify identified deficiencies. Further, any real evidence of stakeholders taking part in the decision making process and designing curricula was absent. Collaborative partnerships with national and foreign universities, HEIs, or other organizations for academic and research cooperation were very limited. Although the Faculty has established a curriculum development committee, significant evidence of meetings of the committee, and monitoring and reviewing were not available.

As HDPs are run by separate departments, no special Institutional mechanisms was noted in relation to setting timetables and record-keeping specifically for the GDP. Website could be maintained in a secured manner with up-to-date information specially

related to the GDP. An MIS could be used maintaining up-to-date data bases in relation to all matters in managing the study program and the necessary facilities may be improved. A Senate approved code of conduct and work norms may be made available for all categories of staff and could be communicated to them. Some sort of appraisal system and more attention to continuous professional development of both academic and non-academic staff would be appreciated. Specially, the young academic staff could be given brief training in other established state universities in the country. A special academic mentoring system was not evident. Student counsellors were handling personal and academic counselling as well as the disciplinary procedures in the absence of a proctoral system, a practice which may lead to conflicts of interests.

However, the Faculty has considered the observations of the previous external quality assurance report for developing the program further. The Faculty adopts a formal procedure for program approval and implementation. The absence of SBS in certain disciplines could be a barrier for the curricular development and reforms. Although documentary evidence was not strong, the academic staff and administrative staff and the Director of physical education assured that students have access to healthcare services, cultural and aesthetic activities recreational, and sports facilities. Special support for students in need to follow the study program was evident. A lift was available in the main building as a logistic support, however much improvement can be expected. GEE and SGBV policy is awaiting the approval by the university council and any other concrete evidence of practice was not evident. However, the academic staff assured gender equity and equality. However, there was no evidence of obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders in relation to these matters. The Faculty has taken some actions in relation to ragging and student discipline, however, a policy level commitment of the Faculty was not seen except the national guidelines.

5.2 Human and Physical Resources

The criterion has 12 standards and 10 standards achieved a score of 2. The remaining standards achieved a score of 1. A score of 2 refers to presence of adequate quality in the standard. The program achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 21 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 58 out of 100.

As highlighted in chapter 2, there are qualified professors, senior lecturers and lecturers in many departments. About 42% of them are having PhDs earned in local or foreign universities. The Faculty earns a low score for measures taken to ensure that its human resource profile is compatible with its needs and comparable with the national and international norms. Therefore, the FoA needs to make a great effort to enhance the

quality of teachers by directing them to other local universities or foreign universities. The review team observed a clear distinction between locally trained and overseas trained academic staff members in the FoA. This requirement was not thoroughly addressed during the conflict/war situation in Jaffna and other areas of Northern province in the last two-three decades. Thus, the university should take very progressive actions to send her young lecturers for foreign training.

Apart from human resource development aspect, FoA earned a low score on the availability of physical resources at the department level. The major issue is the insufficient space for academic staff for their research and academic affairs. Most of the academic staff members are having very small room while some of them are not having at least such a facility. They are sharing the available space. Most of the lecture halls are not equipped with basic facilities such as multimedia, magi boards, smart boards, chairs, desks, etc. Especially, most of the existing buildings are not having facilities for differently able students.

The university ensured students' access to a well-resourced library facility with internet facility and provides a user-friendly service. The library should be further updated with modern facilities which is essential to encourage students to use the facilities.

The FoA is having a newly established computer lab that can serve to 145 students at a time. The review panel observed the computer facility and witnessed that they maintain it well. There are trained staff for all necessary guidance for students. Computer literacy is a mandatory course unit in the second semester of the first year.

The students who are following GDP do not have industrial training programmes (Internships) introduced by the FoA. Thus, they do not have opportunities to improve their hard and soft skills to compete in the job market. It seems that the Career Guidance Unit of the University does not have a separate programme for GDP students. However, they conduct some workshops targeting public and private sector employment. Thus, District Secretariat, National Enterprise Development Authority, UN Agencies, and American Corner are supporting agencies to conduct such training workshops for graduates. But according to the Director, Career Guidance, students are always seeking government employment due to higher job security, than challenging opportunities with higher income in the private sector.

As usual, UoJ also has several programmes that make avenues for GDP students to engage in multicultural activities promoting social harmony between student groups as well as communities. It depends on the university calendar and the annual ritual calendar. In addition, there are inter-university multicultural programmes such as Kavitha.

Though there are some adequate standards identified by the FoA, such provisions are not available specifically for GDP students. As highlighted elsewhere, the FoA is giving

more priority for the HDPs, and the GDP is a subordinate process. Thus, the GDP students do not get maximum benefits in the learning process. The GDP and the HDP are defined as a three-year and a four-year programmes, respectively. The students of both degree programmes study in the same lecture hall. There is no specific curriculum for the GDP in the FoA, UoJ and the GDP students are taking selected courses offered for the HDPs in two subjects in addition to them taking a few optional courses. Probably this reduces the demand for additional infrastructure facilities in the faculty to run the GDP. Academic staff too have the same convenience in the process of teaching and examination. This is a critical barrier for establishing a quality GDP in the FoA.

5.3 Programme Design and Development

In relation to programme design and development, among the 24 standards none achieves a score of 3 and 8 standards achieve a score of 2 indicating adequate quality with a few issues about the quality in relation to those standards, and 9 standards achieve a score of 1 indicating major issues in either the quality maintained in relation to those standards or the strength of evidence provided. Finally, 7 achieve a score of 0 indicating inadequate quality or irrelevant evidence provided. The program achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 25 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 52 out of 150.

As described before, there is no specific curriculum for the GDP that targets the achievement of learning outcomes specific to Level 5 of the SLQF. A graduate profile is not available. Students follow a common program in the 1st academic year (1st and 2nd semesters). All students are supposed to earn 24 credits in the 1st year from two subjects. In the second and third academic years, students who are in the GDP take selected courses from the same two subjects delivered to students in the HDP in those subjects. Attention to GDP students in the classes appear to be less, a fact probably originating from the very limited number of GDP students in the Faculty. An unusually large proportion of students achieve a GPA higher than 3.0 at the end of the 1st year and opt for admission to specialization in any one of the disciplines followed in the first year. And also, the students admitted through the special intake are invariably admitted to the HDPs in those respective disciplines. Although there is a regulation in the faculty not to admit more than 40 students for specialization in a single subject, some disciplines appear not to follow the regulation and admit large numbers of students for specialization. All these may have contributed to having very small numbers of students in the GDP in the 2nd and 3rd years. Further, the HDP students who earn 60 credits in only one discipline during the first 3 years have also a chance to leave at the end of the 3rd academic year as GD holders (only having earned 15 credits in an elective subject in the 2nd and 3rd years plus the 12 credits of the other subject earned in the 1st year). There was ample evidence that this is happening frequently, and it was also noted that they graduate as GD holders with better passes compared to regular GDP students. All these result from not having a graduate profile for the GD holders. Owing to the absence of a

specific curriculum for the GDP the Faculty fails to provide adequate and convincing evidence under many of the standards in this criterion.

The GDP students too continue to follow the same subjects as in the first year, earning 54 more credits (30 from the core subject and 24 from the other core subject) plus earning 15 credits from electives and 3 from an auxiliary unit (IT etc.) in their 2nd and 3rd years. This could be considered as an attempt to give them a slightly wider exposure. The Faculty attempts to match the learning volumes as described by the SLQF and that should be commended.

However, an outcome based curriculum for the GDP should be developed to match the purpose and scope of qualification and level descriptors as described in the SLQF, based on a well described graduate profile. In this process of programme design and development, obtaining the views of all stakeholders including the professionals, the industry, students, graduates, and all levels of academic staff is of paramount importance and the benchmark statements and practices of other parallel local and international programmes and standards should be considered. Such a training should encourage students to take multidisciplinary courses with a credit sharing mechanism. Incorporation of an industrial internship is highly encouraged. The program should be coherent and should promotes progression through increasing demands and challenges towards the third year, ultimately achieving the outcomes described in the graduate profile comparable to Level 5 of SLQF. It should integrate appropriate learning strategies such as self-directed learning, collaborative learning, creative and critical thinking, lifelong learning, interpersonal communication and teamwork into the courses. Most importantly, once design, monitoring and modifications has to take place.

5.4 Course/ Module Design and Development

In relation to course design and development, among the 19 standards none achieves a score of 3, 10 standards achieve a score of 2 indicating adequate quality with a few issues about the quality in relation to those standards, 8 standards achieve a score of 1 indicating major issues in either the quality maintained in relation to those standards or the strength of evidence provided, and 1 standard achieves a score of 0 indicating inadequate quality or irrelevant evidence provided. The program achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 28 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 74 out of 150.

The courses delivered in the 1st and 2nd semesters are followed by all students who take those subjects and earn 24 credits during the year. As was mentioned in Criterion 3, the rest of the courses offered under the core subjects to earn 54 credits are designed for the honours degree programs (HDPs) of the respective disciplines. This being the core content of the students of the GDP, those are not tailor-made for them as there is no specific curriculum for the GDP. Therefore, in many courses under many disciplines, the breadth and the depth of courses appear to be not appropriate for the GD holders.

Again, the contribution and opinion of external stakeholders could be obtained in this process in compliance with the SBS (wherever available). Absence of a specific graduate profile hinders the process as the course content cannot be aligned to achieve identified learning outcomes along the broader attributes of an ideal general degree graduate, identified with the Faculty and the University but who will cater to the needs of society at large.

The courses could be made more outcome based with appropriate learning strategies and assessment following the principle of constructively alignment. The requirements of differently abled students have not been considered in the courses design although they have been facilitated during the implementation.

The Faculty uses an approved format in developing the courses, and these were available in the departments. The key content such as aims, learning outcomes, courses content were clearly given with the total volume of learning indicated. However, in certain disciplines, learning volumes were not clearly indicated for theory and skills component with allocated time with adequate details on the assessment. Despite the deficiencies in the GDP, the faculty has a formal course approval process and has streamlined approaches in relation to the HDPs. The IQAC is new and it was reported in meetings that the Faculty is currently in the process of taking actions to improve standards in course design and development.

Therefore, it would be great for the Faculty to have a curriculum comprehensively explaining the learning experience offered to the GDP students in an outcome based model with a very clear graduate profile and the courses designed with the content and the assessments constructively aligned to achieve the attributes described in the graduate profile.

5.5. Teaching and Learning

During the site visit no teaching activities took place as it was a vacation. The majority of students were not available in the university for the team to observe teaching and learning practices. This limited our observations made during the site visit. However, the Dean and coordinator of IQAC made an effort to get a few students to be interviewed by the review panel.

The FoA has committed to cater to the learning needs of the students. When the students are admitted, in the orientation programme, they are given a handbook which includes details of the programme such as an introduction, credit limits, available courses, course selection, assessment methods, departments and the course units offered by each department. This has been in practice for a while. Students are given course specifications and the timetables in the first lecture itself. Moreover the timetables are displayed on the noticeboards in the respective departments.

The review team could not find evidence of clearly defined ILOs for the students in the GDP and this has an impact on the shape of teaching and learning process. The students who secure less than 3.00 GPA are following courses designed for the students who obtained more than 3.00 GPA. The assessment in the courses for students of the GDP and the HDP is the same, which is not acceptable.

The FoA uses a blended course structure to make sure that the learning is a very interesting and rewarding experience. Therefore, the Faculty allows students to follow courses from other faculties such as Management. And they were offered courses such as ICT and English to improve the quality and relevance of the graduates.

We could not see clear evidence that the academic staff uses their own research to enhance teaching. However, as reported by the librarian and the staff members, they too promote research among the faculty staff members. Though there is such motivation provided by the librarian and the academic staff, the students do not make use of the books available in the libraries. The review team could not find evidence to prove that the teachers used information gained from the assessments to improve teaching further.

As the students in GDP are put in the same class rooms no evidence of adequate attention to GDP students was found to make the subject matter more interesting and relevant to them. The GDP students reported that often they are told in the classrooms that the higher level of learning offered to HDP students is irrelevant to them. Some departments offer extra training, assignments related to life experience, and fieldwork for HDP students only, while some other departments encouraged GDP students too to take those courses. However, teachers do not encourage GDP students to do research or go for publications.

Teachers appear to be very concerned about the gender, cultural, race, and religious dimensions of the students. In that sense, the review team felt that most of the teachers are emphasising these cultural value systems of Jaffna, which is enriching their identities.

All the students are offered ICT courses and the university provides LMS facilities for both the staff and the students, although many courses do not use Moodle. However, the students can access the Faculty computer unit and use computers and internet facilities for their learning purposes.

The faculty does not adopt a peer review process. The academic staff members are not in favour of it due to many reasons. However, the Faculty agrees that peer review should be adopted.

The results of the students are reported to Heads of the departments and the Dean of the Faculty during the meetings of results boards. The reviewers felt that there is no one

nor a body to monitor the progress of the students learning and then to help them when necessary. It was revealed that the GDP students are also administered under different departments, although the departments appear not to pay adequate attention to their grievances.

The review team did not witness adoption of an outcome based approach in teaching and learning, innovative teaching practices, a high level of teacher-student interaction through self-appraisal, peer evaluation, and student feedback, for evaluating the performance of teachers in relation to the GDP. In general, the students in the general degree programme are not well looked after by the FoA. The review team felt that there is a dire need of giving the total responsibility of handling GDP to a special unit in the FoA or that it should be administered directly under the Dean.

5.6 Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression

As the students enrolled in the BA generally follow courses with the students in honours degree programmes, achievement of ILOs become a complex phenomenon. It would be a very complex and practically impossible task for a teacher to concentrate on two different ILOs for two groups of students in the same lecture. This situation is further made complex and impossible within the context of a majority of the students drawn from honours degrees while a very small number of students are from general degree programmes. As was revealed by the students in the in-depth discussions, the teachers always give priority to the honours degree students and emphasize the value of an honours degree. Within the culture of the FoA, which admires, appreciates, and promotes the honours degree programmes, the general students who are in these classes also may not question or highlight the ILOs of a general degree programme.

The faculty too has other supporting services such as career guidance and counselling, an IT centre, and the ELTU unit for students to get additional support for their skills and career development. The career guidance unit has conducted several programmes for students with the help of relevant government ministries. The university too is in the process of finalising gender policy, which will be useful for students mainly coming from a society which admires a more patriarchal value system and socio-cultural structure. The university student culture also seems to be quite a male dominant culture, which has been in the process of changing with the opening of the doors of the university to Sinhala and Muslim students from other areas as well as for the youth from the plantation areas.

As explained to us by the staff members and the Dean of the faculty, and also shown even in the documents used during orientation sessions, the students are clearly informed of their rights, responsibilities and conduct for successfully completing the programme through the Student Charter / Code of Conduct. The staff share with the students the code of disciplined behaviour prepared by UGC in the Tamil medium. As indicated in the agenda, some of the key themes that they discussed are, *the role of students in the university, student's welfare, gender based violence, etc.*

The review team could not find that the faculty highlight that they conduct training programmes to provide ongoing training for users (students and relevant staff) of common learning resources and specialized learning resources. The permanent staff members all must undergo the staff development programme offered by the staff development centre of the university. The students have access to the computer lab which can be used by any student of the faculty to access the internet, finalise assignments. etc.

The staff members of the faculty said that the student support opportunities are accessible and clearly communicated. During orientation programme, the staff educate students on gender based violence activities, student's health, student's welfare activities, library facilities, etc. However, the review team could not find any evidence to prove that they monitor and evaluates the support services and uses the feedback for improvement.

The Faculty of Arts did not have thought to offer, monitors and improves special support and assistance services for students with special needs (differently-abled students). However, the faculty does not have a special centre for look after the needs of the differently abled students.

The faculty of arts has academic counsellors who hold meaningful discussions with students focusing on areas such as student support, choice of courses, assessments, career paths etc. In generally, 18 students are assigned to an academic as it was revealed in the discussion sessions. However, we could not observe the student and teacher relationship as the students were not available in the university during the review.

The review team could not find evidence to say that the faculty monitors student learning experience, achievement and satisfaction annually to ensure that learning experiences are effective and help in achieving the desired outcomes.

As said by the librarian of the Jaffna University the relationship between the academic departments and the library is very weak. The librarian or any other staff members do not take part in the faculty board meetings as it is the way faculty board meetings are conducted in other universities. The annual university allocation for purchasing book is 75,000 rupees which is not adequate. It appeared that the arts faculty does not use ICT-led tools to facilitate students' access and use of the library efficiently; ensures that the use of library and information resources is integrated into the learning process.

The FoA does not facilitates and monitors on a continuous basis, student progression from one level to the next and ensures successful completion of the programme towards gainful employment/ further advanced study; makes necessary improvements and facilitates the students who do not complete the programme successfully, to settle with

the fall-back options available. For general degree followers, there is no fall back option. It would be very much useful if the FoA can engage in discussion with the relevant stake holders when revising their curriculum.

The FoA also did not have any plans to enhance learning opportunities for students by collaborating with employers who offer work-based learning or placement opportunities. As it was mostly highlighted, the students follow honours degree programmes as that qualification will be very much employment-oriented.

The Career Guidance unit of the university is very active. The Career Guidance unit is given an opportunity to educate new students in the orientation programme annually. The university organises Career information, advice and guidance are provided enabling students to make choices about their future. Students are empowered to access relevant information on the local, regional, national and international graduate labour markets, enabling them to make informed career choices. The Head of Career Guidance said that the students of the FoA have a lot of problems as they lack soft skills, and he is conducting programmes for them with the help of the state and the private institutes.

The review team did not observe that proper processes are in place for communicating with students throughout the period of study in a structured, clear, concise, and timely manner, about opportunities designed to enable their development and achievement towards employment; the effectiveness of these processes is regularly evaluated.

The FoA can do more to improve career education. Networking with alumni, information and guidance, and the development of career management skills along with soft skills are considered to be inter-dependent parts of student support; there is an institution-wide commitment to prepare students for their future careers.

The FoA does have a programme, but it does not play satisfactory role to promote employability of students and their ability to articulate their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through working in partnership with external stakeholders such as employers, societies, and local communities.

As the review team observed the FoA does not have a system to regularly monitor retention, progression, completion / graduation rates, employment rates, and per student costs and take remedial measures where necessary. Moreover, the FoA must do much to improve the satisfaction of the students and it must regularly and systematically gather information about student satisfaction with the support services. Information collected is used for improvement of the services.

The FoA does not have fair, effective and timely procedures for handling student complaints and academic appeals, which would ensure opportunities for students to raise matters of concern without risk of disadvantage. As it operates there is no special unit or centre to look after the needs of the students who follow general degree

programmes. They must consult the department heads. However, the general degree students did not have very positive feeling about the department staff members approach towards them.

The FoA implements the policy on gender equity and equality and supports opportunities for student leadership, creative activities and scholarship; it promotes active academic/social interaction between the faculty and students. The university has recently adopted this policy and it will be implemented within the university. This will be very helpful for female students, especially those who are from Jaffna, to behave freely. Now, the male students do not let them wear jeans, and only frocks, and skirts and blouses are allowed. However, the female students from Sinhala and Estate Tamil communities are allowed to come in attire of their choice.

5.7 Student Assessment and Awards

Student assessment and awards are a vital criterion to promote the quality of teaching. It helps to motivate them in their learning process. There are 17 standards under the criterion. Among the 17 standards none achieves a score of 3. The criterion achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 30 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 88 out of 75.

The GDP is typically a programme subordinate to the HDPs in the FoA, UoJ and almost all student assessment tasks are targeted at assessing students in the HDP. The Student Hand Book (SHB) provides examination by-laws and other regulations in detail, but the focus is on the HDP. Some disciplines have introduced continuous assessments, assignments and presentations to encourage process and skills development, which may be noted as positive signs. The examination is conducted together for GDP and HDP students, but the answering scripts of HDP and GDP are packed separately for marking. Though the academic staff says that there is no discrimination in the marking process, GDP students are of the opinion that they are always given lower marks. As the HDP students have the option of leaving at the end of three years as a GD holder, this create an unfairness to those who are truly in the GDP and this could be one reason why those who leave with such a fall-back option end up with better GPAs. As the deputy registrar confirmed, HDP students obtain higher GPAs and classes, while GDP students obtain lower GPAs, with very few students obtaining classes at the final examination. Thus, there is a competition to get 3.00 or higher GPA at the end of the 1st year, enter into the HDP, and use the fall-back option to leave at the end of the third year with a better result, which could be considered educationally as a totally unsound practice.

Though there is a curriculum review committee in the university, the existing curriculum was revised in 2009. Before that, there was a typical GDP curriculum practised from 2001 to 2009 and designed with three subjects, parallel to the model practised in other universities. However, the 2009 GDP curriculum was approved by the Senate with only two major subjects. Although the SER indicates that the curriculum should be revised every five years, it is not applicable to the GDP since there is no specific curriculum for

the GDP. Owing to the absence of a dedicated curriculum, the student assessment in the GDP of the FoA, of the UoJ is not comparable to globally accepted assessment systems.

Some examiners are appointed from other universities, but it is very limited. Most of the examinations are governed by internal examiners. It is noted that when external examiners are in place, it delays releasing examination results. However, as confirmed by the deputy registrar, the students are getting their transcripts without a delay. The Students' Handbook (SHB) provides necessary guidance on examination (by-laws) and programme achievements. There are special provisions made for evaluation of visually challenged students.

The FoA of UoJ has many scholarships and awards listed in the SHB of 2017. The best 9 performers at the first year examination get scholarships under different subject disciplines. There are 4 scholarships given for the second-year performances. Eight scholarships are available for the best performances at the third year. At the completion of the degrees, 16 prizes are given for the best performance in various subject disciplines. All these scholarships and prizes are motivating students in their education, but most of those are for performances in the HDPs, not in the GDP. Therefore, it is important to have scholarships and prizes to encourage the performance of GDP students too.

Overall, the GDP of FoA in UoJ does not have its own curriculum focusing the undergraduates' performances. Thus, all assessments and awards are common for both degree programmes. The review panel identified the need of having a separate curriculum with a dedicated assessment system and award system for undergraduates in GDP.

5.8 Innovative and Healthy Practices

In relation to innovative and healthy practices, among the 14 standards none achieves a score of 3, 5 standards achieve a score of 2 indicating adequate quality with a few issues about the quality in relation to those standards, 7 standards achieve a score of 1 indicating major issues in either the quality maintained in relation to those standards or the strength of evidence provided, and 2 standard achieves a score of 0 indicating inadequate quality or irrelevant evidence being provided. The program achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 17 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 20 out of 25.

The FoA does not have a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) associated with newly established ICT facilities. The strategic plan of the Faculty identifies the requirement and has placed it in the 2017 activity plan. It is a progressive step. However, it is essential to be aligned with the suggested new curriculum for the GDP. Another standard which does not receive a score is the possibility of a research experience in the GDP. It is a situation

common to other Sri Lankan universities too, but it can be incorporated in a new curriculum developed for the GDP. As highlighted above, the students in the GDP do not have an opportunity to get an industrial training or internship, in the way it is planned now.

There is not much evidence of providing Open Educational Resources (OER) or facilities to undergraduate in the GDP of FoA, UoJ. Some departments claim the availability of such facilities, but there is no way to verify it since the web page of the FoA is not available or updated.

There are some research activities carried out by the staff members in different departments. However, there is no way to confirm the opportunities for GDP students to join such activities. It seems that such opportunities are seized by HDP students. As a subordinate programme, the GDP is undervalued in many aspects and students are always seeking opportunities to enter into a HDP. The numbers of GDP programme students has drastically reduced in recent years and the majority of them register as HDP students. The SER itself provides statistical data (see page 5, section 1.5) for this. It implies that GDP students are getting lesser opportunities in their study period.

There is no special mechanism to appreciate the contribution of academic staff members in research and development. Though there is a UGC circular on this matter, it has not been made effective yet. However, their performance is considered in promotion schemes as per the UGC circulars as applicable to any other university.

Only three departments (Geography, Sociology, and Fine Arts) have maintained external links with local or international agencies. It is an innovative action that can be considered as an example for other departments to plan their learning, teaching and research capacities. The majority of academic staff members in the FoA are young and they can utilize such links if kept in place. In addition, there are some initiatives by both students and teachers to collect funds for academic and students' recreational activities, but those are not sustainable avenues to generate sufficient funds, nor a conducive environment to enhance teaching, learning and research activities.

Sports and recreational activities are available for both HDP and GDP students. They participate in sports activities organized by the university and in the inter-faculty and inter-university games. As the Director of Sports highlighted, the UoJ is having a construction project to build an indoor sports complex. That will further expand the opportunities in sports. He reports that there are no such facilities at the moment and available resources are shared with the Vavuniya Campus too. There is a gap between

male and female students in their engagement in extracurricular activities and it is noted that the poor trend in involvement in sports activities by female students is due to lack of hostel facilities.

As highlighted above, curriculum development is not taking place according to the norms. There is no specific curriculum for GDP since 2009. It is a grave matter for the curriculum development committee of the university. Therefore, it is proposed that a separate curriculum is essential for the GDP of the FoA, UoJ to enhance the quality and relevance of graduates of the GDP.

Chapter 6. Grading of Overall Performance of the Programme

After careful observation and review of the existing situation in the FoA, UoJ, the review panel finally concluded their scores for each criterion and standard with a thorough desk review and a site visit. The overall result is furnished in the Table 2.

Table 2: Overall Performance of the GDP

S.N.	Criteria	Weighted min score allowed	Actual Criterion-wise score (Rounded up)
1	Programme Management	75	78
2	Human and Physical Resources	50	58
3	Programme Design and Development	75	52
4	Course/ Module Design and Development	75	74
5	Teaching and Learning	75	74
6	Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression	50	46
7	Student Assessment and Awards	75	88
8	Innovative and Healthy Practices	25	20
	Total on a thousand scale		490
	%		49

Irrespective of minimum weighted criterion scores, as the overall percentage is 49 (i.e., less than 60), according to the guidelines given in the manual of Program Review, the grade achieved by the programme is D (unsatisfactory).

Chapter 7. Commendations and Recommendations

The entire exercise of the programme review by the three-member panel was to assess the quality of the GDP of FoA, UoJ based on the criteria stipulated by the QAAC of the UGC as defined in the Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Educational Institutions. Thus, following 18 key points are given in summarizing review on the GDP.

1. The review process was conducted in three days between 11th to 13th September 2017. The process was based on the agenda agreed between the review team and the university (Faculty of Arts, UoJ).
2. Though the university wanted this programme evaluated, it appeared that the university does not pay much attention to the BA General Degree programme (GDP).
3. We could not see a separate curriculum for GDP. The Faculty of Arts delivers the GDP simply offering selected courses from the Honours Degree Programmes (HDP) to the students in the GDP. The durations of the HDP and the GDP are four and three years respectively.
4. The review team could not find clearly defined separate Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for the GDP.
5. Student have the opportunity to exit from the HDP with a General Degree with completion of three years in the GDP (9 credits). This is made possible by not having a specifically identified distinct curriculum with appropriate ILOs and a graduate profile at the SLQF level 5 compared to level 6 (HDP).
6. In the selection of courses for the GDP from the courses offered for the HDP, it appears that there are serious doubts in meeting specific objectives of a GDP. The Faculty adopts an “administration friendly but academically neglected” approach.
7. At the moment, the GDP includes two subject related course units offered in the 2nd and 3rd years which is not the norm in Sri Lanka and globally.
8. Based on these observations, this GDP seems to be neither an honours degree nor a general degree. It is something in between these two levels.
9. There was a huge recognition for the HDP rather than the GDP among the students as well as the staff members. It appeared that the staff formally and informally promotes students for the HDP.

10. A discussion with the students reveals that they have serious doubts about obtaining higher grades/classes in the GDP compared to those who follow HDPs.
11. As students shared there were situations where the GDP students are cornered, reduced, and not paid adequate attention to in the classes offered with the HDP students.
12. There was no special unit or department in the Faculty to look after the needs of the students in the GDP.
13. There is a serious need to have a dedicated curriculum for the GDP.
14. This curriculum development should take place with a wider participatory approach in consultation with all stakeholders. At the moment students are planning more often to become government servants (mostly as school teachers), and effective career guidance is not seen.
15. Though teaching and setting examination papers are done together for students in the GDP and the HDP, the answer scripts of the GDP students are separately packed. This process may induce the examiners to have a pre-judgemental attitude during marking.
16. Some academic staff members are of the opinion that they do not have sufficient human resources and physical resources to maintain separate degree programs (GDP and HDP).
17. The staff members pointed out that they did not have adequate time to develop a good SER. However, it was witnessed that two junior academic members have fulfilled all requirements of writing the SER under the supervision of the coordinator, IQAC of the Faculty.
18. The SER evaluation team found that the evidence was not properly organized in a manner, such that the reviewers could identify and verify systematically.

The review panel strongly recommended to have a specific curriculum for the GDP of FoA, UoJ. Also, this requirement should be considered as an urgent matter by the Faculty and the University.

Chapter 8: Summary

Programme review is not a new practice for the Sri Lankan University system since it was introduced in 2009. The present programme review in the FoA, UoJ is the second of its kind after eight years for this faculty. However, The University of Jaffna has suffered heavily due to the three-decades long conflict/war prevailed in the Northern province in Sri Lanka. Thus, assuring quality is a challenge for the University due to repercussions of the conflict/war situation.

The present programme review conducted is focused on GDP of FoA and the review panel clearly witnessed that the existing GDP program is a subordinate element of the HDP. There is no specific curriculum for the GDP. Thus, the undergraduates do not get an exposure that is on par with the national and international standards for a GDP.

Following the UGC, QAAC criteria and the guidelines for programme review, the review panel has given its judgement, which is **unsatisfactory** for the GDP of FoA, UoJ.

Therefore, the review panel suggests and recommends generating an outcome based curriculum for the GDP of the FoA, UoJ aligning with the purpose, standards and attributes of the qualification of a general degree holder as prescribed in the SLQF of the UGC. The other specific concerns are listed under the commendations and recommendations.

Appendix I: Final Programme Schedule

Programme Review – University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka General Degree Program 11-13 September 2017 Final Programme Schedule

Time	Schedule	Comments
	10.09.2017 Arriving to Jaffna and Residing in a Hotel	It is expected to have single room for each team member having a conducive environment to engage in academic tasks. Internet facility must be arranged if not available.
Day One 11.09.2017		
8.00 – 8.30	Meeting with IQAU Director – who will be the focal point during the visit	
8.45 – 9.30	Meeting with Vice Chancellor/Deputy Vice Chancellor	
9.45 – 10.15	Meeting with Dean of Faculty	
10.15 – 12.00	Meeting with Academic Heads of Departments	Tea will be served while progressing the discussion
12.00 – 1.00	Meeting with academic members of Department 1	
1.00 – 2.00	Lunch	
2.00 – 2.30	Meeting with academic members of Department 2	
2.30 – 3.00	Meeting with academic members of Department 3	
3.00 – 3.30	Meeting with academic members of Department 4	
3.30 – 4.00	Tea Time	
4.00 – 4.30	Meeting with academic members of Department 5	
4.30 – 5.00	Meeting with academic members of Department 6	
5.00 – 5.30	Meeting with academic members of Department 7	
5.30	Returning to the Hotel	
7.00 – 8.00	Team Discussion on Day One Tasks Performed and Mind Mapping Exercise on Day Two	

End of Day One Tasks		
Day Two 12.09.2017		
8.00 – 8.30	Meeting with academic members of Department 8	
8.30 – 9.00	Meeting with academic members of Department 9	
9.00 – 9.30	Meeting with academic members of Department 10	
9.30 – 10.00	Meeting with academic members of Department 11	
10.00 – 10.30	Meeting with academic members of Department 12	
10.30 – 11.00	Tea Time	
11.00 – 12.00	Meeting with administrative staff of Faculty and relevant programs	
12.00 – 12.30	Meeting with technical officers	
12.30 – 1.00	Meeting with supporting staff	
1.00 – 2.00	Lunch	
2.00 – 5.30	Meeting with student groups from each department. Each department should arrange 5-8 members representing gender, ethnicity, and subject discipline. Each group will get 20 minutes maximum.	Tea will be served while progressing the discussion
5.45	Returning to the Hotel	
7.00 – 8.00	Team Discussion on Day Two Tasks Performed and Mind Mapping Exercise on Day Three	
	End of Day Two Tasks	
Day three 13.09.2017		
8.00 – 12.30	Observing documentation of evidence	Tea will be served while progressing the discussion
12.30 – 1.30	Lunch	
1.30 – 2.30	Observing facilities relevant to program	
2.30 – 3.00	Observing teaching/learning sessions relevant to program	Heads of the Departments should inform the review team on schedule lectures enabling the team to select few lectures
3.00 – 3.15	Meeting with the Dean of Faculty	
3.15 – 3.30	Any other meeting deemed to be important for the program review	Tea will be served while progressing the discussion
3.30 – 4.00	Final wrap up meeting with senior management of program.	The Dean and Heads of Department should be participated
4.00	Returning to Colombo	