Programme Management

Innovative and Healthy Practices

Programme Design and Development

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Human and Physical Resources

Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression

Teaching and Learning

Course / Module Design and Development

PROGRAM REVIEW 2017

University of Jaffna
Faculty of Arts
Languages

Programme Review Report

of

BA Honours Degree Programmes in Languages

BA (Hons) Degree in Linguistics

BA (Hons) Degree in English Literature

BA (Hons) Degree in Tamil

BA (Hons) Degree in Sanskrit

BA (Hons) Degree in Translational Studies

(Cluster 2)

Faculty of Arts,

University of Jaffna

Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council

University Grants Commission

2018

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Section 1—Brief Introduction to the Study Programmes

The Programme Review of Cluster 2 (Languages) covered 5 study programmes; BA Honours Degree Programmes in Linguistics, English Literature, Tamil, Sanskrit and Translation Studies. It therefore included two Programmes, Tamil and Sanskrit, that are not only among the oldest programmes offered at the University of Jaffna from its inception in 1974 but are also of central importance to the social and cultural identity of the region, Jaffna, in which the University is located. Of the 5 subjects in the Cluster, only Translation Studies is relatively new, having been introduced in 2010. Linguistics and English Literature study programmes are the heirs to the Department of Languages and Cultural Studies which was started in 1981.

The Vice Chancellor and the Dean informed the Programme Review team (Review Team) that the Corporate Plan of the University contains a proposal to split the current Faculty of Arts into 4 new Faculties: Humanities, Social Sciences, Hindu Studies and Education. It is possible that of the 5 programmes in the Cluster, at least Sanskrit, may be moved to the proposed new Faculty of Hindu Studies, which we were told, was being established at the request of the general public, once that is set up. Of the five programmes, only Tamil and Sanskrit had undergone a Subject Review during the previous cycle.

The Faculty of Arts has approximately 2700 students and, according to the Dean of the Faculty, the student-staff ratio is 18:1. However, the number of students on average in the 5 Programmes of the Language Cluster is relatively low, the number ranging from 83 to 174 for the 5 years, 2012-2016, the years for which numbers were available. The number of permanent staff, ranging from professors to probationary lecturers was 20, and it was observed that some programmes (Linguistics, Tamil and Sanskrit) had more qualified and senior staff than the others (English Literature and Translation Studies). Of the 5 programmes, English Literature and Sanskrit have the lowest number of staff, perhaps owing to low student enrollment. However, Translation Studies programme, which admits students through a separate window has high student enrollment, currently functions with 2 lecturers (1 probationary and 1 temporary) though, according to the Coordinator of the Unit, they are about to recruit 2 more lecturers to the staff. Given the importance of human resource for programme delivery and management, the need of recruiting more staff to under-staffed departments cannot be emphasized enough, particularly as all study programmes offer an Honours Degree in the relevant subjects/disciplines. In the case of the Sanskrit programme, the shortage of staff extended to the clerical staff since they did not have a permanent clerk for the programme.

The Faculty members responsible for student welfare and counseling seemed aware of the need to have a strong support system in place to help students who are survivors of the Civil War—both financially and in terms of psycho-social well-being. They also mentioned

the Faculty's strong stand against ragging and commitment to promote social harmony. However, in the meeting with students, it was mentioned that the focus was more on Sinhala-Tamil "ethnic" harmony rather than on other causes of disharmony such as caste and gender that are also pressing problems at the University.

Material resources made available to language study programmes are far below the requirements. Of the 5 programmes in the Cluster, Translation Studies appeared the most poorly resourced, housed in a building of which the roof seemed near collapse, a condition that endangers the staff who work in the building as well as confidential documents and files that are housed in the building. The space allocated for the Unit, which caters to large student numbers, was equally unsatisfactory since the Coordinator, two permanent members of the academic staff, the clerk and all visiting staff had to be accommodated in a room that measured something like 10'x15'. Though staff of the Linguistics, Sanskrit, Tamil and English Literature programmes had more spacious offices and rooms, the building where the 5 programmes of the Cluster were housed gave an air of dilapidation which was not conducive to teaching and learning. It looked dusty and unkempt, more like a neglected 'Central College' than a university. Both staff and students complained of the shortage of classrooms, the students mentioning that on occasion classes in Translation Studies had to be canceled because of non-availability of classrooms.

As for IT and ESL skills, the Faculty was in conformity with the UGC prescribed guidelines for enhancing them. The Faculty has the support of qualified staff from a thriving English Language Teaching Center (in terms of number of qualified academic staff) but the students wanted all their ESL courses to be converted into credit courses. According to the Director of the IT Center, barring one NC course in IT in the First Year, there were no IT courses for Arts Faculty students thereafter. The Faculty had no dedicated IT staff.

It is indeed conceivable that to some extent the quality of teaching and learning and the teaching-learning environment have been impeded by the long years of the Civil War. Although the University did not have to shut down, according to the Dean, it had to be relocated to Chavakachcehri during the height of the war in Jaffna. Though the present moment of the Programme Review constitutes the post-war period for the University, the staff mentioned that it is difficult to bring resource persons in the respective fields with whom interactions would enhance quality of the learning experience for students. The staff also mentioned limited funds for field trips and other learning-enhancement activities outside of Jaffna that impact negatively on the learning environment. Student counselors emphasized the enduring, psychological impact of the Civil War which is reflected in the violent conduct of some students. Further, the extreme poverty prevailing in most parts of the Northern and Eastern Provinces which impacts students' readiness and commitment for academic pursuits.

Though the Programme Review Manual (PR Manual) devised by the UGC emphasized the importance of advanced teaching and learning aids, the programmes in the Cluster were grappling with the scarcity of essential hardware such as computers and multi-media equipment. The Programme in Linguistics still lacks a Phonetics Laboratory even though they had drawn up plans for and submitted to the Faculty and University several years ago. In the case of Translation Studies, though the Programme had been set up in 2010 and included an introductory course in "Machine Translation," the Programme still does not have a dedicated computer facility with the required software to introduce students meaningfully to the course content. Though the Dean said that the Faculty had a good computer facility, the staff and students said that many computers did not function and number of computer terminals available were not adequate for the demands of some programmes. However, it should also be mentioned that staff in some programmes did not make optimum use of the ICT resources available, for instance, LMS, which the Dean/Arts said was available for the Faculty. Students in some programmes said that staff still followed the 'note-taking' method and therefore most parts of teaching and training were 'teacher-centered.'

The library is poorly resourced and, even the available resources appear to be inadequately utilized for teaching and learning. The students in particular complained of the poor resources and the absence of new and up to date titles in their respective fields. This was especially affecting the Programme in Translation Studies. The Senior Assistant Librarian who spoke to us also complained of low budgetary allocations which hamper the purchase of books and e-resources. However, he also complained of poor usage of the library's available resources by students and low incentive to do so by the members of the academic staff who, according to him, do not build library-based assignments, directed and self-directed, into their courses. According to him, this disincentive towards library use begins during the freshmen orientation period, during which period more time needed to be allocated for the orientation of students to the Library. He also pointed out that the lack of air-conditioning discouraged students from using the Library and that the taking over of one floor of the Library for a computer lab did not promote expansion in Library resources for student and staff.

The graduates educated at public expense through these and other study programmes appear to remain largely unemployed. There appear to be a tendency for graduates to go on waiting for 'government' or public-sector jobs after graduation and as of available information that there were some 5000 'unemployed' graduates in the North and East who are waiting for such openings. The Director of the Career Guidance Unit however said that the Unit was organizing workshops to introduce students to different career opportunities and options that are available, particularly in 'non-state' sectors in order to reduce graduates dependency on 'government jobs.'

Section 2 – Review Team's' Observations on the Self-Evaluation Report

2.1   Preparation of the SER

The self-evaluation report (SER) of the Cluster 2 had generally followed the guidelines prescribed by the PR Manual although the SER writers had separated the 156 standards into those that were common for the 5 programmes and those that were department/programme-specific. Accordingly, they had categorized 108 standards as common and 48 standards as programme-specific. However, the SER gives all the signs of something prepared in a hurry; it was repetitive and carried typographic errors which showed it had not been proof-read. At times, the standards, claims and evidence documents did not match. Moreover, given the length of the SER, it is possible that the it exceeds the word count specified in the PR Manual, although the review team was not able to gauge this accurately because the soft-copy of the SER was in PDF format. The SER writers and academic staff members responsible for the 5 programmes, as well as the Dean, cited the short notice given regarding the impending Programme Review as the reason for the poor quality of the SER. Though the notice had been sent from the QAAC in December 2016, it had reached the Faculty only on the 07th of April 2017. Members of at least one programme (Sanskrit) claimed that the permanent academic staff of the programme had not been invited to contribute to, nor consulted in, the writing of the SER. The review team speculates that the writing of the SER had been assigned to those who were perceived to be good writers in English.

2.2 Approach to Writing the SER

The review team observed that the Faculty had no approved graduate profile though the SER states that it is available. During the site visit, the Dean informed the review team that they are in the process of developing graduate competency profile. According to the SER as well as the Dean, the Faculty has been growing steadily for the past 43 years (1974-2017), having begun with just four departments, namely, Tamil, Sinhala, Hindu Civilization, and History.

2.3 Observations on the SWOT Analysis

The review team is in agreement with most part of the SWOT profile presented in the SER. However, a weakness that the PR Team observed, but not explicitly stated in the SER relates to the low enrollment in the General Degree Program because of the admission of almost all students to the Honours Degree Programmes in the Faculty. This in turn has resulted in a neglect of the General Degree Programme. It was also observed that as per the common template used for degree programmes, the general degree students (i.e., those

enrolled in the 3-year degree programme) did not have many electives to choose from in order to complete the necessary credit requirement stipulated in the PR Manual. In fact, opting for the General Degree appears to be used as a means of early exit by some students.

Another important "weakness" identified by the SWOT analysis was the low numbers in some of the degree programmes such as Sanskrit and English Literature despite the availability of qualified staff. This is particularly the case in Sanskrit which had 3 lecturers in the Senior Lecturer grade. For instance, in the year 2014, Sanskrit had 0 students. However, given the cultural significance of Sanskrit to the community in the region, it is important to support and sustain the programme despite low registration.

The SWOT profile also listed an "interactive subject" category under "strengths" in the SER. But the review team observed that the given curriculum outline does not give much flexibility students. The SWOT analysis had identified the inadequate infrastructure facilities as a negative factor in developing the quality of the study programmes, something which was noted by the review team as well. Although the SER claimed that the University website is maintained by the ICT Cell and monitored by Faculty representatives, there was no indication that they regularly updated and maintained the University website given that the review team was informed that the University website had been hacked many times and, even at the time of the site visit, was under repair.

The SWOT profile however highlighted the limited access to online journals, e-books, and software packages, due to poor internet connectivity. During the site visit, it was brought to the attention of the review team that the University has not developed links with external resource bases such as EBSCO Host, Emerald, Taylor & Francis etc., and had no e-repository. Some programmes also lacked Subject Benchmark Statements (SBSs).

As identified in the SWOT analysis, the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is still in a rudimentary stage. During the site visit, the review team was told that the IQAC had started functioning properly only during the past 6 months of 2017. It is possible that the effective functioning of the IQAC in 2017 had something to do with the impending Program Review.

Although the SWOT profile mentioned that curricula had been designed taking into consideration of SLQF Guidelines and OBE and SCL approach, there was no evidence of this in the curricula of some of the study programme. Moreover, the last curriculum revisions had been undertaken a little over 5 years ago for all the programmes except Translation Studies and the coordinators of some programmes said that they had already started the curricula revision process. The Translation Studies Programme, which had been launched in 2010, said that their first batch of students had graduated only in 2015/2016 and that they were planning to undertake the revision based on the findings of exit survey of their first batch of graduates. However, when revising the current curricula of the Study Programmes, it is important to take into consideration of the current SLQF Guidelines. It is

also a fact that, except for Translation Studies, the other programmes had been reviewed under the previous cycle of subject reviews. However, not all the programmes had internalized the recommendations made in the reviews to the same extent.

In the SWOT profile, links between the Faculty and other national and international institutions were regarded as opportunities. As a University affected for long by the corrosive impacts of the Civil War, it is important that the Faculty takes every effort to build up such links and to utilize such links to obtain better training and exposure for staff and students of the Faculty. However, as mentioned in the SWOT profile, both distance and limited funds appeared to militate against utilizing outside experts in the conduct of undergraduate training and staff development programmes—be it staff training, career guidance or internships for undergraduates.

While it is not clear whether the special needs students of the Faculty were necessarily victims of civil war, it is necessary that study programmes pay attention to their needs. As mentioned in the SWOT profile, there were no special arrangements or facilities to accommodate such students in terms of the study programme delivery or infrastructure. Moreover, although the SER mentioned a multi-cultural and multi–ethnic student population and non-gender discrimination as strengths, during the site visit, students mentioned that less attention is paid to social harmony *vis-a-vis* gender and caste relations than to the issue of 'ethnic harmony'. It is also a fact that the University's SGBV Policy had been only approved at the 415th Council held in July 2017, raising the possibility that the impending Programme Review was a push factor in its adoption.

Section 3: Brief Description of the Review Process

The Review Process began with mandatory workshops organized by the UGC which sought to educate Reviewers about the aim and purpose of quality assurance and the rationale behind the Programme Review Manual, and what is expected of the Reviewers both during the desk review and the site visit. As part of this, the review team therefore undertook individual scoring of the SERs which were then sent to the QAAC. Later, in the case of our review team, it was decided to merge the separate reviews into one. Before the site visit, the review team agreed upon the standards, claims and evidence documents that they needed to look at in more detail during the site visit and the chair for the Chair of the review team prepared the site visit schedule in consultation with the other team members, which was then emailed to the email address of the Dean, Faculty of Arts (with copy to the Director/QAAC), which appears on the website for the Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna.

However, upon arriving at the University of Jaffna, the PR Team found that the Dean had not received the site visit schedule sent in advance. The Chair then shared a copy of the schedule with the Dean and the Faculty Coordinator of the IQAC who then had to scramble to put together an impromptu schedule with some last-minute alterations as we proceeded (due to lack of availability of some personnel during the time-slots given). There were no presentations on the Cluster by the SER writers or study programme coordinators.

There were both avoidable and unavoidable obstacles that gave an air of unpreparedness on the part of the Faculty for the site visit (though three programme review teams were at the Faculty during our visit). First among the avoidable obstacles for the proper conduct of the programme review were the scheduling of the review during the Faculty's long end-semester break. Second was the scheduling of the visit during a time-period when members of some programmes were, *en masse*, away on GCE A/L grading, which meant we did not get to meet most of the senior staff of the study programme in Tamil and the senior-most staff member of the study programme in English Literature. This also meant that two crucial components to the site Visit could not be carried out: meeting with a representative sample of students from the five programmes and observation of teaching-learning practices. Although the staff arranged a meeting with students from the 5 programmes and had productive exchange of ideas with them, we could not ascertain how 'representative' the student group was of the generality of the student population and their needs and aspirations. For example, although the students present unanimously wanted ESL courses to be converted to credit courses, we cannot be sure whether students coming from parts of region where English teaching may be non-existent in schools (such as remote areas of Kilinochchi and Mulaitivu) would be agreeable to the introduction of credit courses which would have a negative impact on the cumulative GPA of students who are unable to perform satisfactorily.

Another obstacle which was *unavoidable,* faced by the Faculty and, in turn by the review team, was the "wild cat" strike by non-academic staff. This meant that the review team were unable to meet the technical, clerical and minor staff of the Cluster. The strike perhaps contributed to the unsatisfactory level of cleanliness of the restrooms and visible piles of dirt on corridors. On the second day, the striking non-academic staff prevented the faculty vehicle from leaving the premises to pick us up which meant that the Faculty had to make alternative transport arrangements which in turn meant that we arrived late for the Review on the 2nd day though all teams were ready to leave for the University by the scheduled time of the pick-up.

As regards to meetings, the Coordinator was able to ensure meetings between the following personnel: Director of IQAU and Coordinator of /IQAC; available academic staff, including cluster writers of the SERs, of the Faculty; student counselors and Senior Treasurer of the ASU; Directors of the Career Guidance and IT Units; representative of the Librarian; some members of staff from the ELTC. These meetings went very well. The members of staff we met were only too ready to answer the Team's questions and were quite honest about where the Faculty was in terms of measuring up to the standards specified in the PR Manual and challenges in the way of such accomplishment. The members of staff were cooperative, cheerful and friendly as they patiently assisted us in the conduct of evaluations related to the site visit and making available the evidence documents. The Team did not encounter any hostility or stone-walling by the staff.

There were some inconveniences relating to the storing of the evidence documents. Initially they were stored in one place and we had to request 3 different venues. Moreover, the "common" evidence documents were stored in a very small room, which meant that the three programme review teams had to take turns reviewing the evidence documents. The rooms were also not all that ventilated and not air-conditioned which the reviewers found somewhat uncomfortable. However, it should be stressed that constrictions in space and ventilation, including A/C, may say as much about limited funding to the Faculties, especially Arts, as about anything else.

Though three days, the total time allocated for the site visit, were far from sufficient to fully observe and evaluate 5 programmes *vis-à-vis* their attainment of quality, the review team attempted to optimally utilize the three days of the site visit by engaging in the following: discussions with key stakeholders (barring those we could not meet due to reasons specified above); observation of facilities in the company of respective members of the 5 programmes; perusal of evidence documents with the assistance of representatives from the 5 programmes and scoring the claims and documents relating to standards. In addition, the review team spent several hours, particularly after formal working hours, to discuss and agree on the modalities for scoring and the actual scoring of standards and evidence documents given that we were aware that the site visit would be our only opportunity to

have a 'face-to-face' meeting. This meant that the review team was exhausted since they had little time to relax. Moreover, having to leave right after the 3rd day of the site visit did not help matters. If the Team had been permitted to stay one more night, they could have used the after-hours of the 3rd day to have some crucial discussions relating to the division of labors for the Report and some discussion regarding what should go into the Key-findings Letter, Draft Report, etc. However, there were no disagreements among the team members regarding the modalities to be adopted for observance of documentation; the assessment of where the 5 programmes were in terms of achieving the standards specified in the Manual; and the overall score and grade.

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

4.1 Overall Approach of the Faculty to Quality Assurance and Management

The review team noted that the implementation of quality assurance and quality management at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Jaffna were quite recent. For example, the activities of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) were obviously at a nascent stage. Moreover, the internalization of best practices and the level of achievement of the required standards varied among the five-degree programmes in the Cluster reviewed.

Overall, it is clear that the Faculty is striving to achieve the stipulated standards in accordance with the Internal Quality Assurance Manual (2013) and the IQA circular of 2015 as evident from the responses of those at the senior management level according to whom the university is still developing systems across academic and administrative structures that would reflect these standards. Even though the quality initiatives were at an elementary stage, IQAU, which had started properly functioning only during the last 6 months, was already putting in place mechanisms that would expedite the implementation of quality enhancement process. The team however noted the difficulties in the way of internalizing quality culture in the day-to-day routine activities for the 5 study programmes in the Cluster given the scarcity of resources mentioned in Section 1. Further, the review team also noted that the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) at Faculty level, which works in liaison with the IQAU to facilitate and implement the quality management system was still in its primary stages.

4.2 Establishment of the Internal Quality Assurance System

In 2015, the University took the important step of establishing the IQAU and preparing the Internal Quality Enhancement Policy and Framework which was approved by the Senate and the Council. This document includes quality principles, quality policy, quality enhancement framework, organizational structure and management of Internal Quality Enhancement System (IQES), composition of the coordinating committee, and the TOR of both the IQAU and IQAC.

In June 2017, the IQAU commenced its activities by taking the lead in developing and facilitating a 'quality culture' in terms of quality policies, guidelines, procedures and reviews as described in their policy document. Though this initiative by the IQAU and university administration encourage the principles of self-evaluation at all levels across the Faculty, the review team identified lapses in the degree of progress made by the staff on a variety of matters related to quality.

4.3 Key Features of the Faculty's Approach to Quality Assurance

- Establishment of an IQAU and the initiation of quality assurance approaches in the University which lay out the plans of the IQAU to implement activities in the future as per guidelines set by the QAAC of UGC in 2015.
- An attempt by the Faculty to introduce and adhere to standards indexing quality assurance as a result of the oncoming Programme Review. This gives hope that the Study Programmes will in future be more vigilant about adhering to standards that would upgrade the quality of degree programmes.
- Commitment for the internalization of best practices that would make the five programmes in the Cluster more efficient as well as accountable to stakeholders.

Though the Faculty has made attempts for internalizing quality culture, the review team noted many areas where the quality of academic activities undertaken could be further improved.

4.4 The Review Team's Impression on the Faculty's Commitment towards Quality Enhancement and Excellence

- The review team felt that the Faculty should perceive that the central purpose of internal quality assurance system is to internalize best practices into of its all activities and thereby bring incremental improvements in the standards of governance and management, programme administration, programme and course curricula design and development, course contents, teaching and learning, and assessments, also in research and innovations and outreach activities.
- The review team noted that the implementation of quality assurance activities should be reflected at department level through its all practices such as regular meetings, keeping of minutes, continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress in internalizing best practices via feedback loops, etc., which would ensure the delivery of quality programmes of study.

Section 5: Judgment on the Eight Criteria of the Programme Review

For each of five study programs, the 156 standards to be reviewed under 8 criteria were divided into two: 108 as common for all study programs and 48 as programme specific.

When allocating marks 0, 1, 2 or 3, the review team first carefully studied the claim of the degree of internalization of best practices and level of achievements of standards stated in the SER with respect to each standard and then observed whether the documentary evidence made available was sufficient to support the claim.

Out of the 5 programmes reviewed, SBSs were listed as available on the QAAC website only for two, namely, English and Tamil even though the SBS for Tamil is not available on the website for download. Although the SBS for English says that it is applicable to degree programmes in English Literature as well, the review team did not consider the SBS compliance aspect for any of the standards when allocating marks for the 5 study programmes.

Taking into consideration a directive issued by the Director of QAAC, the reviewers agreed not to consider certain standards, which are listed in the following table, because they were of the opinion that the standards were not applicable to the respective study programmes.

Study Program	LINGUISTICS	ENGLISH LITRETURE	TAMIL	SANSKRIT	TRANSLATION STUDIES
Standards Not Applicable	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.18, 6.17, 8.7, 8.9, 8.10	2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.18, 6.17, 8.7, 8.9, 8.10	2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.18, 5.13, 6.17, 8.7, 8.9, 8.10	2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.18, 6.17, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 8.7, 8.9, 8.10

Based on this decision, the criterion-wise scores too were calculated leaving out the said standards. The following table gives the number of standards considered in calculating the criterion-wise scores for each study programme:

No	Criterion	Number of Standards Considered				
		LINGUISTICS	ENGLISH LITRETURE	TAMIL	SANSKRIT	TRANSLATION STUDIES
1	Programme Management	27/27	27/27	27/27	27/27	27/27
2	Human and Physical	12/12	11/12	11/12	11/12	12/12

	Resources				
3	Programme Design and Development	19/24	19/24	19/24	19/24	20/24
4	Course/ Module Design and Development	19/19	19/19	19/19	19/19	19/19
5	Teaching and Learning	19/19	19/19	18/19	19/19	19/19
6	Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression	23/24	23/24	23/24	23/24	24/24
7	Student Assessment and Awards	17/17	17/17	17/17	17/17	17/17
8	Innovative and Healthy Practices	11/14	11/14	11/14	10/14	11/14

The following table shows the raw criterion-wise scores for each study programme.

No	Criterion	Raw Criterion-wise Score				
		LINGUISTICS	ENGLISH LITRETURE	TAMIL	SANSKRIT	TRANSLATION STUDIES
1	Programme Management	64/81	65/81	64/81	64/81	64/81
2	Human and Physical Resources	28/36	27/33	27/33	27/33	27/36
3	Programme Design and Development	36/57	38/57	37/57	34/57	43/60
4	Course/ Module Design and Development	37/57	34/57	33/57	37/57	40/57
5	Teaching and Learning	28/57	30/57	24/54	25/57	33/57
6	Learning Environment, Student	42/69	45/69	41/69	41/69	47/72

	Support and Progression					
7	Student Assessment and Awards	32/51	31/51	31/51	31/51	32/51
8	Innovative and Healthy Practices	19/33	17/33	19/33	19/30	20/33

Observations made by the review team on the strengths and weaknesses of each criterion are stated below along with the recommendations for enhancement of quality of the study programmes.

5.1 Criterion 1: Programme Management

Strengths

- Establishment by the Faculty level Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) though its effective functioning according to the IQAC Coordinator dates back only 6 months.
- Establishment of a Faculty-level Curriculum Evaluating Committee in 2015.
- Distribution of Student Handbook to all the incoming students.
- Conduct of an orientation program by the Faculty for all the newly enrolled students.
- Introduction of a student-feedback system for some modules.
- Appointment of two student representatives to the meetings of the Faculty Board.
- Availability of a Gender Equity and Equality (GEE) policy and By-laws on Sexual and Gender Based Harassment (SGBV) approved by the Senate and Council.
- Commitment and actions taken by the faculty to monitor and prevent ragging on the university campus.

Weaknesses

- Absence of any evidence to support that the implementation of Faculty's Strategic Plan is monitored by Senate and Council.
- Attendance records of the three representatives of the educated public appointed as external members of Faculty Board and their contribution were not satisfactory.
- Faculty and Department websites were not up to date.
- Limited ICT facilities for undergraduates.
- Failure to implement   the performance appraisal system prescribed by the University.
- Insufficient measures taken by the Faculty to monitor the implementation of the curriculum.
- Absence of a properly institutionalized mechanism for academic counselling.

Recommendations

- Include a regular agenda item in the Faculty Board meeting to monitor the implementation of the Faculty's Strategic Plan.
- Take necessary steps to enhance the availability of ICT facilities for undergraduates.
- Update the Faculty and Department websites and devising means to minimize if not eliminate cyber-attacks on the university website.
- Introduce the following monitoring measures: student- feedback for all course modules; peer observations on teachers at regular intervals; annual graduate satisfaction surveys at exit points; employability studies; employer feedback surveys;

5.2 Criterion 2: Human and Physical Resources

Strengths

- Induction programme conducted by the SDC for all probationary lecturers as per UGC guidelines.
- Provision of opportunities for students to acquire ICT skills despite limited availability of ICT facilities and technical assistance in the Faculty.
- ELTC offering ESL courses from 100- to 300-levels in the undergraduate study programmes and guiding students in the use of English in their academic work.
- Faculty's strong stand against ragging and encouragement of social harmony.
- Awareness of the need to have a strong support system to help students who are survivors of the Civil War by the Faculty members responsible for student welfare and counseling.

Weaknesses

- Inadequacy of academic staff for most study programmes to deliver the prescribed courses at a satisfactory level as per UGC guidelines on teacher-student ratios in the Faculties of Arts.
- Inadequate infrastructure facilities for administration, and teaching and learning activities.
- Students' perception that the Faculty is not focusing enough on the causes of disharmony such as caste and gender which they see as pressing problems at the University.

Recommendations

- Provide the staff with the required training in the application of outcome-based education & student-centered learning (OBE-SCL) concepts and approaches into programme development, teaching and learning and assessments.
- Encourage the staff to promote students to use the facilities and resources available in the Library for their studies by building library-based assignments as well as by incorporating a longer orientation to the Library during the Freshmen Orientation Programme.
- Address all causes of disharmony at the University.

5.3 Criterion 3: Programme Design and Development

Strengths

- Establishment of a Curriculum Evaluation Committee at Faculty level in 2015.
- Availability of inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary courses through elective course units.
- Allowing sufficient flexibility in students' choices of courses in the curricula layouts of the study programmes.
- Availability of entry and exit pathways and fall back options.

Weaknesses

- Non-availability of a graduate profile and not focusing on the intended meta competencies or outcomes when designing the curricula of study programmes.
- Failure to involve external stakeholders directly in the programme and course development process.
- Absence of a mechanism in the Faculty to track the outcomes of programme monitoring and review for the purpose of effecting continuous improvement of academic programmes and courses.
- Failure to collect and record information on annual basis about respective graduates' destinations after graduation by some Study Programmes in the Cluster.

Recommendations

- Design and adopt graduate profiles for all study programme by taking into account of University and Faculty visions and missions, SLQF requirements and desirable attributes of graduates.
- Make a request to the QAAC of the UGC to develop relevant Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) for study programmes in the cluster for which such information is not available.
- Adopt SLQF guidelines and OBE-SCL approach in the next cycle of curricula revisions.

5.4 Criterion 4: Course/ Module Design and Development

Strengths

- Initiation by the IQAU to adopt relevant policies, and by-laws and guidelines when undertaking course/module design and development activities.
- Availability of a sufficiently clear course specification in the Students Handbook giving the credit weight, concise objectives, course content, and course evaluation methods.
- Designing the course layouts, contents and the schedule of lessons in such a manner so as to allow students to complete the prescribed courses within the stipulated time.

Weaknesses

- Non-compliance with SLQF guidelines as regards to details relating to course design. For example, although the course design specifies the credit value, only the teaching time is explicitly given; it does not give time allocated for different types of teaching and learning executrices such as direct contact hours, self-learning time, assignments, assessments, etc.
- Non-integration of teaching and learning strategies in course delivery which encourage student to engage in self-directed learning, collaborative learning, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication and teamwork.

Recommendations

- Comply with the SLQF guidelines in designing the specifications of courses/modules during the next cycle of curricula revision.
- Adopt OBE_SCL approach in course design and development so as to incorporate student-centered and blended-learning teaching and learning tools/techniques into course curricula.

5.5 Criterion 5: Teaching and Learning

Strengths

- Providing students with a copy of the handbook containing course specifications and making available the time-table before the commencement of each academic year and semester.
- Obtaining feedback on the effectiveness and quality of teaching from students by though this practice has only recently been started.

- Engagement of every student, registered for the Honours Degree programmes reviewed, in research through an undergraduate research project and dissertation that carries 6 credits.

Weaknesses

- Inadequate application of blended-learning approach to maximize student engagement with the learning process.
- Inadequate use of ICT-based applications as instructional tools by lecturers to promote self-directed learning and collaborative learning by students.
- Absence of an established mechanism to monitor teaching and learning activities for their appropriateness and effectiveness.
- Absence of a mechanism to promote adoption of best practices in teaching and learning.
- Absence of an institutional mechanism to appraise and reward champions of teaching excellence.
- Absence of an institutional mechanism to conduct peer observation of teaching.

Recommendations

- Initiate mechanism through the IQAC to monitor teaching and learning activities and to make recommendations to improve quality.
- Conduct training workshops for academics to impart required competencies in application of OBE-SCL concepts and approach in programme delivery.
- Encourage lecturers to use student-centered learning techniques/tool and to maximize student engagement in learning activities.
- Establish an insitutional mechanism peer observation of teaching.
- Introduce an insitutional mechanism to appraise and reward excellence in teaching.

5.6 Criterion 6: Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression

Strengths

- Availability of a mandatory structured orientation programme to give guidance to all new students.
- Availability of fallback options for students.
- Holding extra-curricular events annually such as Colour Awards (or "Colours Night") Ceremony at university level and Arts Week at Faculty level with the full involvement of the entire Faculty.
- The inclusion of a regular agenda item titled "students' appeals" at Faculty Board meetings to address students' complaints and grievances.

Weaknesses

- Inadequate use of library facilities, e-learning resources, and ICT-based tools by lecturers to enable and enhance the academic success of students.
- Inadequacies in counselling services offered at faculty level.
- Non-availability of opportunities for students to enhance their learning experiences through placements in outside organizations (i.e. internships/industrial placement) where such placements and exposures are relevant.

Recommendations

- Establish well organized and efficient academic counselling service at faculty level for students of all years and programmes of study.
- Encourage students to use of library and ICT facilities optimally for their academic pursuits.
- Establish and maintain closer link with the respective alumni of the study programmes and utilize such networks for mentoring purposes and for providing guidance for students in making choices on career paths.

5.7 Criterion 7: Student Assessment and Awards

Strengths

- Notifying the students on the weightages relating to different components of assessments with respect to each course unit.
- Providing a clear statement of graduation requirements in the Student Handbook.
- Allowing students who have received a grade of C+ or lower to retake the final examination and improve the grade up to B+.
- Use of special evaluation criteria and methods for visually- challenged candidates.

Weaknesses

- Non-compliance with SLQF guidelines by the study programmes reviewed; except the volume of learning, other criteria such as the Name of the Qualification, Qualification Descriptors and Level Descriptors in the SLQF guidelines have not been met.
- Offering ESL courses as non-GAP courses.

Recommendations

- Adopt SLQF guidelines when the curricula of study programmes are revised in the next cycle.
- Take into consideration of the performances and grades of ICT and ESL course units followed by students in calculating the cumulative GPA.

5.8 Criterion 8: Innovative and Healthy Practices

Strengths

- Incorporation and encouragement of undergraduate research through the student research project and dissertation worth 6 credits for all students in the Honours Degree Programmes.
- Provision of fallback and exit options for students.

Weaknesses

- Not having a Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) system in place in the Faculty to support the delivery of learning material and learning process.
- Insufficient incorporation of Open Educational Resources (OER) into their courses by academic staff to supplement teaching and learning.
- Absence of a reward system to encourage academics to achieve excellence in teaching, research and outreach activities.
- Absence of links with international and national agencies by most of the study programmes reviewed which would have helped to build the reputation of the respective study programme and expose students to the 'world of work'.
- Absence of an official credit transfer policy.

Recommendations

- Introduce Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) approach and tools into all study programmes.
- Encourage academic staff to incorporate OERs into their courses to supplement teaching and learning through closer collaboration with the Library staff.
- Establish new and strengthen the existing, links as appropriate international organization and national, governmental and non-governmental agencies for academic and research collaboration.

Section 6 - Grading of Overall Performance of the programme

Based on the guidelines given in the PR manual, grading of overall performance of each honours study program is as follows:

Criteria	Weighted minimum score	Actual Criterion-wise Score				
		LINGUISTICS	ENGLISH LITRETURE	TAMIL	SANSKRIT	TRANSLATION STUDIES
Programme Management	75	118.51	120.37	118.51	118.51	118.51
Human and Physical Resources	50	77.77	81.81	81.81	81.81	75.00
Programme Design and Development	75	94.73	100	97.36	89.47	107.50
Course/ Module Design and Development	75	97.36	89.47	86.84	97.36	105.26
Teaching and Learning	75	73.68	78.94	63.15	65.78	86.84
Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression	50	60.86	65.21	59.42	59.42	65.27
Student Assessment and Awards	75	94.11	91.17	91.17	91.17	94.11
Innovative and Healthy Practices	25	28.78	25.75	28.78	31.66	30.30
Total on a Thousand Scale		645.80	652.72	627.04	635.18	682.59
Total as a Percentage (%)		65%	65%	63%	64%	68%

Grade	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**
Performance Descriptor	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Interpretation of Descriptor	Minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of a programme of study; requires improvement in several aspects	Minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of a programme of study; requires improvement in several aspects	Minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of a programme of study; requires improvement in several aspects	Minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of a programme of study; requires improvement in several aspects	Minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of a programme of study; requires improvement in several aspects

Section 7: Commendations and Recommendations

Since Section 5 details the strengths, weaknesses and recommendations at great length, in order to avoid needless repetition, we list below what we consider are the most important commendations and recommendations.

Commendations:

- Initiation by IQAC of the adoption of relevant policies and by-laws when undertaking activities.
- Establishment of a Curriculum Evaluation Committee at Faculty level.
- Availability and encouragement of inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary courses through elective course units.
- Availability of entry and exit pathways and fall back options.
- Special evaluation criteria available for visually-challenged candidates.
- Availability of a Gender Equity and Equality (GEE) policy and By-laws on Sexual and Gender Based Harassment (SGBV) approved by the Senate and Council.
- Holding an annual Colour Awards Ceremony (at university level) and an Arts Week (in the Faculty).

Recommendations:

- Implement the Faculty's Strategic Plan and review the progress made at the Faculty Board regular, in regular intervals.
- Update the Faculty and Department websites and install a hack-proof mechanism to prevent cyber-attacks.
- Design Graduate Profiles for each study programme in compliance with SLQF requirements and guidelines, and by taking into consideration of desirable graduates' competencies decided through stakeholder consultation.
- Provide the staff with the required training on application of SLQF, SBSs and the OBE-SCL approach in programme design and development, and teaching and learning, and assessments.
- Request the UGC to develop Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) for study programmes which do not have such benchmarks at present and adopting the same.
- Incorporate SLQF guidelines, SBBs and OBE-SCL approach in future curricula revision.
- Initiate a mechanism through IQAC to monitor teaching and learning activities and make recommendations where necessary.
- Ensure all degrees awarded by the Faculty are in full compliance with SLQF.
- Improve the technical capacity of all academics through appropriate training in the application of student-centered and blended learning techniques and tools and encourage lecturers to use such methods in teaching, training and assessments.

- Establish an institutional mechanism to conduct student -feedback on teaching for each and every course, collate, analyse and transmit the feedback received to respective teachers.
- Establish an institutional mechanism to conduct peer observation of teaching and also to ensure the teachers, where necessary to submit themselves for continuous professional development programmes.
- Introduce an institutional mechanism to apprise and reward academics for excellence in teaching, research and outreach activities.
- Establishment of institutionalized and well-structured academic counselling service for students.
- Ensure the available library facilities are optimally used by academics and students.
- Establish formal links with the respective alumni of the study programmes and use such network for providing mentoring services for students and facilitate their entry into 'world of work'.
- Introduce Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) methods and tools where relevant to facilitate the delivery of study programmes.
- Encourage academic work in close liaison with the Library staff to incorporate OERs into teaching and training.
- Establish new and enhance existing, links with relevant international, national, governmental and non-governmental agencies to strengthen academic, research and cultural pursuits.

Section 8: Summary

As the Sections above make clear, there are both strengths and weaknesses with regard to the quality of the 5 study programmes (listed in Cluster 2) as measured by the eight review criteria specified in the PR Manual of the QAAC.

As detailed in Section 1, though some of the programmes in the Cluster are of central significance *vis-à-vis* the regional location of the University of Jaffna, facilities and resources, both human and material, for the effective and efficient conduct of the Programmes are insufficient, a point highlighted by both staff and students and clearly evident to the review team. Resource inadequacy is of course not unique to the Faculty of Arts in Jaffna but is a condition common to other Faculties of Arts in the country. Nevertheless, considering that the Faculty (and the University) is located in and caters to students from a region affected by the long years of the War, it is important that the UGC support enhancement of resources even as it assesses parity in terms of 'quality' across the university system.

As Section 2 indicates, one of the key reasons for the poorly drafted SER was the short notice given to the Faculty and in turn to the SER writing teams due to the delay in transmitting the UGC's plan to undertake a review of the programmes in the Arts Faculty to the Dean and the Faculty. However, it is a fact that the SER team had overlooked some obvious lapses in writing such as proof-reading.

The progress of the 5 honours study programmes and the Faculty as well the University has been undoubtedly negatively impacted by the Civil War. However, the current administration have included a proposal in the Corporate Plan of the for splitting the Faculty of Arts into several faculties to better address present-day community and social needs. Moreover, the SWOT analysis detailed in the SER had not clearly identified prevailing status of the Faculty and study programmes in terms of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as observed by the review team during the site visit.

Section 3 discusses how little prepared the Faculty was for the Programme Review. As mentioned in Section3, the Faculty's attempts to ensure optimal conditions for the site visit through impromptu scheduling were not satisfactory. However, the Coordinator, IQAC, and the staff of the respective programmes and unit heads supporting the Faculty's programmes, extended their fullest cooperation for the Programme Review during the site visit. It was clear to the reviewtTeam that there were committed members of staff in the Faculty and at the University level who wish to give of their best to the Faculty. They work with enthusiasm and dedication under sub-optimal conditions. It is important that they be encouraged and supported, particularly the younger members of staff among whom the keenness was quite evident.

The noteworthy point in Section 4 which needs emphasis here is the rudimentary status of the IQAU in the University. Though, the unit was established in 2015, and the Internal Quality Enhancement Policy and Framework was approved by the Council in 2016, as stated by the Director, the IQAU, it had commenced its activities only in June 2017. Hence, though some measures had been taken by individual programmes in the Cluster to adopt and internalize best practices, more work needs to be done in order to ensure internalization of quality culture within the Departments which cater for 5 honours study programmes.

Section 5, which offers the review team's "judgment on the eight criteria of the programme review," shows that the 5 Programmes have only attained the "minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of a programme of study" and "requires improvement in several aspects." The key aspects where such improvements are needed along with suggested recommendations are listed in point form below:

- Implementation of the Faculty's Strategic Plan.
- Strengthening of ICT facilities for undergraduates.
- Introduction and implementation of a performance appraisal system.
- Introduction of structured academic counselling.
- Adoption of Graduate Profile for each study programme.
- Adoption of Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) for the study programmes.
- Periodic Curriculum Review and Revision.
- Incorporation of SLQF guidelines and OBE-SCL concepts and approach into curriculum revision.
- Inclusion of concise and accurate course specification in the Student Handbook.
- Systematic monitoring of teaching and learning activities and adoption of recommendations coming from such efforts for improving quality.
- Implementation of an appropriate mechanism to identify and reward excellence in teaching.
- Implementation of an appropriate mechanism to obtain student-feedback for across all courses/modules.
- Implementation of an appropriate mechanism to perform peer observation of teaching.
- Conducting regular training workshops to train lecturers in the application of modern teaching and training methods.
- Promoting optimal use of available library facilities
- Networking with the respective alumni of the programmes
- Initiation of national and international collaboration programmes
- Incorporation of Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) methods and tools into all study programmes.
- Adoption of an official credit transfer policy

Section 6 indicates that the level of accomplishment of the five programmes in all 8 criteria. Given that the overall performance grade of each of the 5 programmes is C, it is clear that the study programmes remain at the minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected, and therefore they are in need of improvements in several aspects. However, given that this is the first-ever Programme Review for at least 3 of the 5 programmes, the review team is of the opinion that the present review should be seen as an opportunity for improvement, part of which entails the provision of optimum human, physical and technical resources. The review team got the impression that most members of the five programmes were keen on the programme review and of the opportunity it offered to highlight the deficiencies in the programmes, some of which had to do with scarce resources, and were interested in putting in place mechanisms for programme improvement. This attitude must be encouraged by the UGC with the allocation of required funds, training and other types of support where possible.

Since Section 7 lists the key commendations and recommendations, we will not repeat the same here.

In sum, it is important that the QAAC and the UGC use the programme review for a first *and* first-hand look at what works and what does not, particularly in the study programmes, and in universities and faculties in general, as well as the contributory factors that lead to such a situation. Each university has a particular location and history and, in the case of conflict-ridden post-independent Sri Lanka, these locations and histories lead to variations in the Faculty's and University's attempts to attain some common standard of quality. It is also a fact that there is a devaluation of 'Arts' streams in terms of state priorities for the 'employable' graduate, which in turn contribute to resource starvation. This short-sighted view, needless to say, further downgrades the quality of the Arts graduate. Therefore, while attempts to measure the extent to which similar programmes in different universities ensure 'quality' in undergraduate study programmes, are commendable, it is important that we do not lose sight of the factors that militate against such parity in quality.

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