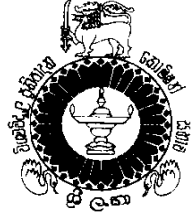




PROGRAM REVIEW 2017

University of Kalaniya
Faculty of Humanities
Cluster - 1



Programme Review Report Cluster 1

BA (Honours) Degree Programmes In

- * Buddhist Culture**
- * Buddhist Philosophy**
- * Pali**
- * Sanskrit**
- * Literacy Criticism**
- * Sinhala**

**Faculty of Humanities
University of Kelaniya
November 2017**

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SECTION 1

Brief Introduction to the Programmes

The review considered six Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree programmes conducted by the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Kelaniya. The six programmes belonged to three academic departments and were clustered (Cluster 1) together for the purpose of the review.

The study programmes conducted under each department were as follows:

1. Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies
 - i. BA Honours Degree Programme in Buddhist Culture
 - ii. BA Honours Degree Programme in Buddhist Philosophy
 - iii. BA Honours Degree Programme in Pali
2. Department of Sanskrit
 - i. BA Honours Degree Programme in Sanskrit
3. Department of Sinhala
 - i. BA Honours Degree Programme in Literary Criticism
 - ii. BA Honours Degree Programme in Sinhala

All three departments have a long history in the University of Kelaniya, as they have existed from the time the university was established in 1959. All degree programmes, except the Honours Programme in Literary Criticism which has been newly introduced by the Department of Sinhala in 2010, have been long-standing time-honoured study programmes in the faculty.

University of Kelaniya is unique among the Sri Lankan State Universities in having two separate faculties, Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Social Sciences, instead of the traditional Arts Faculty that offer BA Degrees. Approximately 1200 students are assigned to these two faculties, by the University Grants Commission (UGC) every year. Of this intake, 550 students are registered in the Faculty of Humanities and 650 in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Students are selected to the two faculties based on the subjects they offered at the ALs, their Z score and the subjects they wish to follow for the degree. If all vacancies are not filled in the first instance then additional intakes are accepted subsequently.

Students are selected for the Honours Degree Programmes at the end of the first year based on their academic performance and subject choice.

The Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies is one of the oldest in the Faculty of Humanities. It is an expanding center of teaching and research with an outstanding international reputation. Each year, approximately 300 students take at least one course from the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies, and many of them continue studies in this discipline as major, or minor concentrations. The department is very inclusive in accepting students into their study programmes/ course modules with or without religious affiliations. Nevertheless, majority of the students, particularly in the Honours Degree Programme in Pali, are Buddhist monks. This is perhaps due to the direct relevance of this discipline to them and the opportunity available for monks to engage in teaching in *pirivenas* and other Buddhist Institutions after completion of their degrees. An outstanding feature of this department was the regular enrollment of foreign students in their Honors Degree Programmes. The department has strong collaborations with foreign universities, particularly of the Far East including Singapore, China, Malaysia and Hong Kong that allows staff/ student exchange and credit transfer. The department also conducts a Diploma programme in Pali and Buddhist Studies to foreign students. At present, the department is further expanding its scope and has proposed a new General/ Honours Degree Programme in Buddhist Psychology & Counseling which has been submitted to the UGC for approval. The expected intake into this Honours Programmes is 15 – 20 students. The department ought to be commended on this timely initiative to introduce a study programme in a discipline that is fast gaining popularity within the country and abroad and therefore likely to attract both local and foreign students.

The Department of Sanskrit is yet another pioneering department within the Faculty of Humanities. This is the only department in the Sri Lankan University system that is dedicated to the study of Sanskrit and offers Sanskrit studies in the Sinhala medium. It is relatively a small department in the Faculty of Humanities with just over 50 undergraduate students registering for courses in this department every year. The department has a vision to expand its teaching programmes beyond strict limits of the Sanskrit Language & Literature. They have commenced working toward introducing a wider selection of subjects that are closely connected and have been influenced by Sanskrit Language such as Astrology, Yoga and Vastuvidya. The department has requested permission from the UGC to implement a name change as the ‘Department of Sanskrit and Eastern Studies’ to reflect the inclusion of related subjects. This undoubtedly will broaden their purview and encourage more students to join in their study programmes. At present, the department conducts a Certificate course/ Diploma programme in Vastuvidya and Yoga for external students and a Certificate in Sanskrit for internal students.

The Department of Sinhala is one of the largest in the Faculty of Humanities with nearly 500 students enrolled for courses conducted by this department annually which includes student enrollments to the first year courses. They also offer auxiliary courses such as Practical Sinhala I & II and Modern Sinhala Writing Skills for students in other departments of the faculty..

The degree programmes conducted by the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies are offered in both English and Sinhala medium. The degree programmes offered by the Departments of Sanskrit and Sinhala are conducted in the Sinhala medium only.

Academic staff strength in all three departments is adequate to conduct the degree programmes, with well qualified senior staff in the category of senior lecturer and above (Pali & Buddhist Studies 11, Sanskrit 5 and Sinhala 12). More carder has been requested from the UGC and some positions have been received by the Departments of Pali & Buddhist Studies and Sanskrit. Department of Sanskrit is in need of more carder because they have introduced a new study programme on “Vastuvidyawa” which is attracting students in substantial numbers.

In the recent times physical resources have been improved. Two subject reviews have been conducted in the Faculty of Humanities previously. The first review had been conducted between 2006 – 2009 period and the second in 2011. The report of the first review was available but a copy of the second review report could not be obtained either from the faculty or from the UGC Website. The subject review conducted during 2006 – 2009 indicated that the Faculty of Humanities was severely constrained due to lack of lecture halls and connected physical resources. However, at present, the departments have sufficient lecture halls, auditoriums, audio-visual facilities and other teaching resources.

SECTION 2

Review Team's Observations on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

As given in the SER, preparation of the SER had been an item on the agenda of Faculty Board meetings held since 2016. A chairman had been appointed by the faculty for this purpose and a writing team picked with representatives from individual academic departments including Heads of Departments. Although the SER suggests that several meetings and some workshops were held to discuss the approach to prepare the SER, at the site visit it transpired that coordination of events had been poor and some academic departments were not made aware of the process till very late. The Heads of Departments agreed that the 'writing-proper' had commenced only as late as one month prior to submission of the SER. That the SER had been put together hurriedly was evident by the fact that it was not received by the UGC by the stipulated dead-line. In spite of this draw back the document was found to have been compiled in a manner that was easy to follow. The material common to the faculty were set out against the relevant standards first and evidences specific to individual study programmes/ departments placed thereafter.

The SER generally followed the prescribed format given in the Programme Review (PR) Manual of the UGC. Section 1 of the SER provided a concise introduction to the academic departments and their degree programmes. Details on numbers of student enrollments, staff strength and physical resources had been presented. However, this section lacked a SWOT analysis of the degree programmes, as required by the PR Manual. The departments' views on how the study programmes have overcome specific weaknesses or built on the strengths would have been very helpful for the review team to understand how well the faculty has responded to the recommendations by previous reviews.

Section 2 consisted of an outline of the process of preparing the SER. This included information about appointment of committees/ writing teams, holding workshops to educate the members on the review process, assigning responsibilities to departments and members of the academic and administrative staff for the purpose of gathering evidences etc.

Section 3 of the SER, which addressed the study programmes' compliance with criteria, had evidences tabulated against each criterion-wise standard. For different standards coming under each criterion evidences were listed in a separate column and coded using acronyms. However, the codes had not been checked for accuracy and some evidence documents had codes completely different than what was mentioned in the SER. Some abbreviations were typed wrong in various places and the description of

certain abbreviations could not be found in the list of abbreviations/ acronyms given in the SER. (For example Literary Criticism was identified as LTRC in the list of abbreviations but throughout the SER it was written as LTCR). It appeared that evidences for criteria 1 and 2 had been collected mainly at faculty-level (as many of these standards are relevant to the faculty as a whole), while individual academic departments had filed in evidences for criteria 3 – 8 relevant to their study programmes also. From the SER it was clear that the six degree programmes had been designed and their syllabuses revised to be within the new Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) guidelines of 2015.

During on-site verification of evidences, assistance from individual departments was readily available to locate these. However, certain evidences listed by departments and some of the faculty-based common evidences could not be traced at the site visit.

According to the PR Manual, a final section summarizing the content should have been included in the SER. However, Section 4 on Summary was not presented and the report ended abruptly after Section 3.

The Programme Review (PR) team understood that a new Dean had been appointed to the Faculty of Humanities and he had been in office for only about 3 months prior to the site visit. Therefore, it can be assumed that a greater part of the preparation for the programme review would have carried out under the previous Dean, whereas the final compilation of the SER may have commenced under the leadership of the present Dean, more or less during his “transition period”.

SECTION 3

A Brief Description of the Review Process

At the beginning of the review process a workshop was conducted on 7th June 2017 at University of Peradeniya in order to make aware of the programme review of the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Faculties of Arts. Later reviewers have participated in two workshops which were especially focused on assessment criteria and desk evaluation. Members of the review team of Cluster 01 of University of Kelaniya discussed the marks assigned by each member for the eight criteria in the desk evaluation during the workshop held on 23rd August at University Grants Commission.

Three review teams consisting of two for Faculty of Humanities and one for Faculty of Social Sciences visited University of Kelaniya during the period of 20th to 22nd September 2017. When the team visited the university on 20th morning Director of Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) University of Kelaniya and the Chairman of Faculty Quality Assurance Cell (FQAC) of the faculty welcomed all three review teams.

The first meeting planned for all three review teams was with Director IQAU and she briefed the schedule of the review visit. Later on review team had the opportunity to meet the Vice Chancellor of the University of Kelaniya at the Senate Room. The Vice Chancellor briefly explained the current situation of the university and he willingly responded to all queries raised by reviewers.

Thereafter two review teams of Faculty of Humanities were accompanied to the Board Room of the Faculty of Humanities where a meeting was arranged with the Dean, Chairman FQAC, Director ICAU and all academic staff. Heads of three departments namely Department of Buddhist Studies & Pali, Department of Sanskrit and Department of Sinhala presented a lengthy description about each department in which the team collected lot of information. Dean, Chairman of FQAC, Heads of Departments and academic staff responded to the questions raised by the review team in reference to the preparation of SER, medium of instruction, orientation programme conducted for first year students, student counseling, code of conduct, student feedback and number of other different aspects to clarify certain issues linked to above. Refreshments followed our meeting and after which a meeting was held only with academic staff. According to them staff development programmes are conducted by the university and the faculty. However those programmes are general and not planned specifically to teach subjects relevant to them.

After lunch reviewers were able to meet the administrative officers of the faculty. They were aware of the SER preparation and they responded the questions raised by the review team regarding student registration, examinations, releasing results, career development opportunities and health facilities available for students.

At the end of the first day, review team met technical, nonacademic and supportive staff of the faculty. Their contribution to the proper functioning of the faculty was briefly described by them. All staff the team met on the first day were aware of the site visit and they answered the questions raised by review team.

During the second day morning reviewers started to observe relevant documents after dividing the four members of the team to two groups, each consisting of two members. Responsibility of observing 1-4 criteria was taken by one pair and 5-8 criteria by the other.

The facilities of the faculty too were observed on the second day morning. We could observe well-equipped lecture halls and classrooms, ICT labs and student hostels. Furthermore review team was able to observe facilities available in the library.

After lunch a meeting was arranged with students representing all academic years of the study programmes. Members of the review team raised questions relevant to orientation programme, facilities available for them, opportunities for learning English, student publications, extra-curricular facilities and the facilities for learning ICT. As the team had to observe large number of documents we could observe only a limited by the end of the second day.

On third day morning the team continued to observe documents till 9am. and thereafter the reviewers divided into two groups to observe teaching sessions conducted by the staff of Department of Buddhist Studies & Pali, Department of Sanskrit and Department of Sinhala. Review team observed a total of four teaching sessions. In the afternoon the review teams of cluster 1 and 4 held the wrap up meeting with the Dean, HoDs, Director of IQAU and academic staff. Members of each review team presented the main points observed, including strengths as well as weaknesses and thanked the corporation extended to review teams during the three days to conclude the site visit successfully.

As a whole the commitment, communication and logistical support extended throughout the site visit from commencement to end of the process, especially by Director of IQAU, is commendable.

Finally review team discussed the key findings and preparation of the final report prior to departure from the university. Attendance sheets of all meetings are given in annex 1.

SECTION 4

Overview of the Faculty's Approach to Quality and Standards

The university has a strong Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) that is committed to maintaining and enhancing standards of its study programmes. The Faculty of Humanities has established its own Faculty Quality Assurance Cell (FQAC) relatively recently, in 2015. But the faculty has not set up a separate office (FQA Office) for this purpose. Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences have a separate center named Inter-Faculty Centre for Coordinating the Modular System (ICCMS). It functions under the supervision of a Director who co-ordinates both faculties in regard to students registration and examination matters. During the discussions it was brought to notice that the Quality Assurance activities, particularly study programme approval and syllabus approval, are carried out by the CULTEC (Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Evaluation Committee).

The University of Kelaniya, which was established at the early period in 1959, consisted of one faculty called the Faculty of Arts instead of having two faculties as Humanities and Social Sciences as it does now. However, as the SER has pointed out, in 1982 it was separated into two faculties: the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Social Sciences for Arts Subjects. The Faculty of Humanities was established to include language courses under relevant Departments of Study. Currently this Faculty consists of 09 departments. As a result of sharing the subjects of the Arts stream between these two faculties, the undergraduates face some restrictions in selecting subjects of their degree programmes. Although the Faculty of Humanities had been successful regarding systematic management of their administrative and academic programmes, convincing evidence was not available whether the faculty had found solutions to the problems facing by undergraduates in selecting subjects or, whether they could act freely regarding it (more restriction form the barriers that students face when they select their subject areas for studies).

There had been two subject reviews before. However, it seems that the faculty has not made use of the recommendations made by the reviews, particularly in changing teaching methods to be more student-centered. Furthermore, it was revealed from evidence that the faculty has not made any plans to take into consideration the recommendations and conclusions of the previous reports in the future..

It was noted that despite the fact that the process of quality assurance was active in the faculty it should be made more systematic. The faculty has followed the rules and regulations of the quality Assurance in drafting courses of studies, conducting lectures, holding examinations and making evaluations. However,

an anomaly prevails in implementing the system as lectures are conducted under the Semester system while examinations are held under the (Term) End of Year system.

The faculty implements short term and long term programs on an Action Plan and a Strategic Plan. The Faculty Board chaired by the Dean conducts the academic and administrative work of the faculty. The monthly meetings of the Faculty Board are held on Thursdays. Student representatives attend these meetings as required. Heads of Departments look after the management of their respective departments. The Heads of Department also hold monthly meetings chaired by the Dean. As the university is administered according to a centralized system, decisions of the faculty are submitted to the senate and the council for confirmation.

New students are admitted through an Induction/Orientation program, to familiarize them with the conditions and surroundings of the university. Information about the university is updated in Student Handbooks which are printed and distributed annually. There are facilities in the faculty for updating information through the Internet and Web-Sites for making information available quickly. The university safeguards the confidentiality of the personal data of the students. In preparation of the annual Time Tables both academic staff and students are consulted. Especially in preparing the Orientation Programs to welcome new entrants, senior students are consulted.

Annual academic Time Tables are prepared in advance which are displayed on Notice Boards and on the Internet. Annual Student Handbook is an important source of information for the new undergraduates. The Orientation Program of two weeks duration is a well-organized program to introduce new-comers to the life in the university that provides them opportunities to get familiarized with the facilities and surroundings. Most of the information on the registration of students, selection of courses of studies and releasing of results are made available through IT and Internet media. The Student Handbook helps students to understand discipline and how they must behave in the university.

Most of the lecture theaters and class rooms are provided with Multi-media and Wi-Fi facilities. Under the HETC project all members of the academic staff have been provided with Laptop computers. Courses of Study are subjected to annual review and student feedback is regularly obtained. Vice Chancellor's awards for research are given annually to successful performers. Academic programs are planned in accordance with the SLQF. Courses of study related to subjects have been systematically drafted and they are implemented according to the supervision and approval of relevant committees. There is a well-organized program for student Welfare and Directors of Student Welfare have been appointed for the purpose. Authorities of the university have paid due attention to the safety of students as well as providing them with health facilities. Halls of Residence are also well maintained. The University Health Centre and the Security Office seemed to be carrying out their tasks and duties adequately. Formal steps have taken to minimize ragging and harassment of female students.

SECTION 5

Judgment on the Eight Criteria of Programme Review

The table below presents the review team's judgment of the level of attainment of quality under each criterion by the six Honours Degree Programmes. Each standard was evaluated based on evidence provided and a score was assigned from 0 – 3 (0= inadequate, 1= barely adequate, 2= adequate, 3= good). Raw criterion-wise score was estimated based on the scoring system given in the PR manual. The raw score of each criterion was converted to the actual criterion-wise score using the formula given in Chapter 3 of the PR Manual. The review team determined that a few standards listed under two criteria were not relevant for the study programmes. That is, in Criterion 6, the standards 6.8 & 6.17 and in Criterion 8, the standard 8.7 were considered not applicable to the degree programmes under review. Therefore these standards were not scored and were not taken into account in the determination of the respective actual criterion-wise score. The sum of actual criterion-wise scores was taken as the overall score of the six Honours Degree Programmes.

Number	Criterion	Raw Score	Actual Score	Weightage (1000)
01	Programme Management	69	128	150
02	Human & Physical Resources	29	81	100
03	Programme Design & Development	54	113	150
04	Course/ Module Design & Development	49	129	150
05	Teaching & Learning	36	95	150
06	Learning Environment, Student Support & Progression	47	71	100
07	Student Assessments & Awards	43	127	150
08	Innovative & Healthy Practices	24	31	50
	Sum of actual criterion-wise score		77.5	

Thus, the overall score obtained by the Honours Degree Programmes is 77.5%.

The section below provides an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each criterion and recommendations for enhancement of quality.

Criterion 1: Programme Management

The university has a clear organizational structure (as given in the Organogram) that supports the management of study programmes in all of its faculties. The Faculty of Humanities adopts common procedures of the university and complies with general regulations and standards set by the university.

The Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) of the university determines the overall standards with regard to quality of study programmes in the university. The Faculty of Humanities has established its own Faculty Quality Assurance Cell (FQAC) in 2015, which functions under a Director who has been appointed by the faculty. The FQAC liaises with the IQAC of the university.

Various sub-committees of the Faculty Board have been established (Research & Publications committee, Learning & Awards committee, Library committee etc.). However, minutes of meetings of these committees were available only for the current year.

All Six Honours Degree Programmes are designed based on a course module system with credit ratings. Each study programme is conducted over four academic years and students are selected to the relevant Honours Degree Programme at the end of the first year of study. In each year courses are conducted over two Semesters of 15 weeks each.

The ICCMS, which has been set up to coordinate activities between the two faculties offering BA degree programmes (Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Social Sciences), plays a major role in streamlining the operations of the study programmes by handling course registrations, time-tabling, exam records, issuing academic grades, transcripts etc. ICCMS uses an IT platform which helps to a large extent to avoid conflicts and overlaps in time tables, the accurate maintenance of student records and keep to the annual academic calendar.

Strengths:

- The six study programmes come under the purview of three historically well-established academic departments in the Faculty of Humanities with a long standing reputation as hallowed halls of learning in their respective academic fields.
- The departments have adequate academic staff and physical resources to deliver the course modules of the Six Honours Degree Programmes that they offer at present.
- The faculty prepares a student Handbook and Course book which are made available to all students at the time of registration or orientation programme. These documents include all necessary information on academic courses as well as rules & regulations governing academic programmes and student life.

- The faculty/ department Websites have information on study programmes and course modules.
- Orientation programmes for new entrants are conducted each year which help the students to become familiar with academic programmes and courses as well as the physical surroundings of the faculty.
- Academic calendar is defined at the beginning of the semester and usually the degree programmes are run on schedule.
- ICCMS allows students to register for courses on-line and registration is time-bound allowing one week to register at the beginning of the semester and one more week if they wish to withdraw/ change registration.
- Academic and examination time tables of the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences are prepared centrally by the ICCMS and communicated to students.
- Duty lists are provided to non-academic staff.

Weaknesses:

- Faculty action plan was available for only 2017.
- Although the Dean's Office plays a central role in developing timetables and allocating lecture halls (based on information provided by ICCMS), still some conflicts are evident in actual practice. It appears to be not uncommon for a lecture room that has been assigned for a given timetable period to be occupied by another party which results in unnecessary waste of time trying to sort out such overlaps. This situation arises most likely because of the very high number of courses that are offered by the two faculties. Conflicts can be avoided if the room allocations given in the timetables are strictly adhered to.
- Faculty/ Department Websites need regular updating. Some information is not current and goes back to even 5 years.
- There was no office space (physically) for the FQAC within the faculty which can be a hindrance to carry out its activities.
- Although monthly meetings of the FQAC are held, it is not clear whether the relevant information and decisions penetrate to different levels of management in the faculty.

For an example, the academic departments indicated that although they were aware about 2 years ago that the study programmes will be subjected for review they felt that the discussions were not fully inclusive, because some departments were not represented in the committees. Further, it appeared that in some instances the FQAC simply used methods developed for other faculties (peer evaluations, student feedback forms) without adopting these to suite the specific needs of the Faculty of Humanities.

Recommendations:

- Greater pro-activeness of the FQAC would be beneficial to maintain and uplift standards of the Honours Degree Programmes.
- FQAC should acquire office space to perform its activities.
- Website to be updated on a regular basis to ensure that current information is available.

Criterion 2: Human and Physical Resources

Academic staff strength in all three departments was adequate to conduct the Honours Degree Programmes. More carder has been requested from the UGC and some positions have been received by the Departments of Pali & Buddhist Studies and Sanskrit. Department of Sanskrit would require more carder, with the proposed expansion in their study programmes. However, non-academic staff strength is barely adequate in all three departments.

In the recent past physical resources have been improved and new buildings have come up in the Faculty of Humanities. The departments have sufficient lecture halls, auditoriums, audio-visual facilities. The physical resources support a good learning environment. However, utilization of these resources, particularly the IT facilities was seen to be not optimal.

Strengths:

- Academic staff /student ratio in all three departments is satisfactory. Action has been initiated to enhance further the staff strength by making requests for additional carder positions.
- Permanent academic staff in all three departments is well qualified. The academic staff 10/14 in the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies, 3/6 in the Department of Sanskrit and 4/15 in the Department of Sinhala, have PhD level qualifications.
- Physical resources such as lecture halls, auditoriums, class-room facilities and audio-visuals are very good. They have been vastly improved since the last review.
- A well-equipped main library is there on the main university; and mini libraries with books and reports relevant to study programmes are available in individual departments.
- University-wide Wi-Fi is free for students and staff.
- Staff Development Center (SDC) conducts training programmes throughout the year for academic, non-academic and administrative staff for continued professional development.
- Staff Development training is mandatory for permanent academic staff.

Weaknesses:

- Non-academic staff strength is poor in all three departments and is limited to one computer assistant cum clerk and one office assistant each only. There are no IT Instructors or technical officers in the departments while there is only one technical officer for the entire faculty. Considering that two new computer labs (each with 50+ terminals) have been installed in the faculty, it is necessary to have academic support staff for smooth running and maintenance of these facilities.
- Utilization of the physical resources, particularly the IT facilities, by staff and students was seen to be low. This may be partly due to lack of technical support. It appeared that, often the lecturers themselves had to set up the audio-visual facilities in the lecture halls before starting the classes because of lack of technical assistance which entailed delays.
- Some academic staff felt that SDC workshops/ training programmes were not sufficiently oriented toward their own discipline, for them to fully benefit from these.

Recommendations:

- Obtain technical staff and IT instructors to the academic departments.
- Request SDC to conduct training programmes on teaching methodologies that focus more on specific subject areas.

Criterion 3: Programme Design and Development

The main body responsible for curriculum development and monitoring in the university is the Curriculum Learning Teaching and Evaluation Committee (CULTEC). This is a senate appointed sub-committee with representatives from each faculty and which organize regular monthly meetings. At faculty level there is a Curriculum Development Committee. The most recent curriculum revisions of the Faculty of Humanities have considered SLQF guidelines of 2015 and all Honours Degree Programmes comply with the basic requirements for SLQF Level VI. Students are required to complete a minimum of 120 course credits, with a minimum 30 credits each year. In the final year completing a research project worth 10 credits is mandatory. However, internships/ industry training were not evident in the degree programmes. This could be due to the inherent nature of some degree programmes where such training may be considered not applicable or irrelevant (Eg. Buddhist Studies, Pali & Sanskrit).

Strengths:

- The IQAU has a strong presence within the university, providing leadership and direction on quality enhancement in study programmes of all faculties.
- The process of curriculum approval is formalized. For this purpose there is a Curriculum Development Committee at faculty (CULTEC) level which operates at senate level with representatives from each faculty.
- Curricular are revised regularly (in 5-year cycles). The most recent curriculum revisions of the Faculty of Humanities have considered SLQF guidelines of 2015 and all study programmes comply with the basic requirements for Honours Degree Programmes at Level VI.
- Study Programme Design conform to the Mission of the Faculty and their Graduate Profile.
- Study Programme outcomes have been aligned with Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), teaching, learning and assessment strategies, especially in Sanskrit.
- Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) has been considered to some extent.

Weaknesses:

- Engagement of the FQAC with academic departments was weak. Some academic departments were not fully aware of the activities of FQAC. There was no evidence of circulation of minutes of the meetings of FQAC among members of the faculty.
- There was no evidence to suggest that stakeholder views have been taken into account in the design of curricular in any of the degree programmes.
- Students have limited opportunity to take in inter-disciplinary, mutli-disciplinary courses except in the first year (before being selected for an honours programme). In the Honours Degree Programmes of the Departments of Sanskrit and Sinhala all course modules are compulsory and only the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies offer optional courses.
- The number of credits assigned for the research project (10 credits) is greater than that required for SLQF Level IV (6 – 8 credits).
- Early exists/ fallback options have not been built into the curriculum.

Recommendations:

- It is good to include a few optional courses at each level in the Honours Degree Programmes so that some flexibility in choice of course modules is available to students even though they major in a particular discipline.

- The credit rating and weightage given to the research component maybe lowered from 10 to 8 credits to match with the SLQF standards.
- Opportunities for industry training should be provided, at least in the degree programmes where such training would be helpful for students to develop their future careers.

Criterion 4: Course Module Design and Development

The programme content has been organized into course modules, with a minimum total of 120 credits required to be completed by candidates in each Honours Degree Programme. Course modules have been developed with specified ILOs, detailed syllabuses, assessment methods and reference materials using standardized formats. Each degree programme includes a research project to be conducted and a dissertation submitted in the final year, which provides for independent learning, creativity and inquiry in students.

Strengths:

- In all six Honours Degree Programmes, study content has been organized into course modules/ course units.
- Course modules have been developed using a standard template approved by the university that includes the course content, specified ILO, assessment methods and recommended reading.
- Course contents are generally aligned with course module/ study programme ILOs.
- Each degree programme includes a research project to be conducted and a dissertation submitted in the final year.
- Formal procedures are adopted for approval of course modules (Curriculum Committee of the Faculty, CULTEC and Senate).
- A comprehensive course unit book is accessible to all students through the Faculty Website. This provides information on all course modules offered by the faculty as well as detailed guidelines on selecting compulsory/ optional/ auxiliary courses for each programme of study.
- Course specifications are given to students in their “course book”.
- Course credits are designed to be completed on schedule.
- Student feedback on course modules is obtained.

Weaknesses:

- Although student feedback on course modules are taken they have not been analyzed nor used for the improvement of courses.
- Details on volume of learning/ teaching (the number of hours of lectures, practical or assignments) were not clearly defined.

Recommendations:

- Student feedback should be analyzed and suggestions taken into account to improve the study programmes.
- It is necessary to explicitly state the credit value of each course and the breakdown of activities within a course for students to know the weightage carried by different components.

Criterion 5: Teaching and Learning

All staff compulsorily participates in the training programmes conducted by the SDC. Academic staff (both permanent and temporary) has the opportunity to attend these courses that are likely to deal with Outcome Based Education (OBE) and Student Centered Learning (SCL) methods. The faculty has ample physical resources to practice such methods. However, teaching and learning is still mainly teacher-centered. No evidence could be found for the use of evaluation indicators for excellence in teaching.

Peer review and student feedback are obtained in several courses but merely as a formality. Feedback has not been used properly to make improvements in the study programmes nor to address student concerns since they have not been subjected to analysis.

IT facilities were very good but the use of these resources in teaching appeared to be minimal. Students have access to many computers and soft-ware. Student usage of these facilities could be encouraged more if dedicated staff/ IT instructors were available to resolve issues that arise during their use.

Strengths:

- Students can engage in self-directed learning through assignments, group projects and research.
- Each department has study space/ mini libraries for students to engage in independent learning.

- In each degree programme, conducting a research project and writing a dissertation are compulsory. This provides opportunities for students to develop skills such as creativity, independent learning, analytical thinking and writing skills.
- Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies and the Department of Sanskrit publish two journals regularly which give students the space and opportunity to display their creative work.
- There is support for students with special needs on the basis of individual need analysis.

Weaknesses:

- University operates an ICT-based platform for blended learning/ Computer-Aided Learning (CAL) but the degree programmes under review hardly use this and no learning resources or courses have been uploaded to the system.
- Blended learning is not practiced at a satisfactory level and the inclusion of OBE/ SCL strategies in teaching was not visible although some of the courses had ILOs based on OBE.
- In the few class-rooms observed, student-teacher interactions was not evident.
- There was hardly any evidence of using Open Educational Resources (OER) in teaching or learning.
- According to some young staff members in the Sinhala Department, SDS training could not be utilized effectively in the teaching of their discipline as methods/ techniques discussed were too general and hence could not be practiced in some subjects.
- Peer review and student feedback are obtained in many courses but merely as a formality. Feedback has not been used properly to make improvements in the study programmes or to address student concerns since they have not been subjected to analysis.
- IT facilities were very good but the use of these resources in teaching appeared to be low.
- Students have access to many computers and soft-ware. However, student usage of these facilities was suboptimal.

Recommendations:

- Utilize IT resources effectively in course development and delivery.
- Practice OBE/ SCL strategies in teaching and learning.
- Analyze peer review and student feedback to improve course content, teaching methods and quality of the degree programmes.
- Initiate teaching excellence awards to recognize teachers who practice good pedagogy.

Criterion 6: Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression

Learning environment and student support services can be considered satisfactory. Students seem to be content with the facilities and resources provided by the university/ faculty/ department. Library, hostel and recreational facilities are good. The departmental libraries are available for reading purposes.

While there is an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Center that services the university at large, there is a shortage of IT personnel/ instructors within the Faculty of Humanities and none available in the academic departments. It was understood that some students who register in Degree Programmes in Pali, Sanskrit or Buddhist Culture and Buddhist Philosophy are not familiar with IT, having had no previous exposure in this field. Therefore such students are discouraged when instructions or proper guidance is not at hand to resolve difficulties that arise during utilization of computer programmes or soft-ware unfamiliar to them.

Direct involvement of staff to monitor student progress was not seen. Students were not aware of job prospects or work opportunities stemming from their degree programmes. No tracer studies on past alumni were available to convince current students of the value of the degree programmes.

Department of English Language Teaching (DELT) conducts a course, English for Humanities, which is compulsory for all students in their first year. However, students felt that one course does not cater to all because students entering the Faculty have different levels of language ability. Therefore DELT should consider conducting courses at different levels that take into account the needs of students with different competencies.

Student safety and welfare have received consideration by the authorities. A case in point is the recruitment of two female Marshalls, following an incident suffered by a female student. Students have access to counseling where confidentiality is maintained. Special effort has been made to support differently-abled students.

Strengths:

- There is cordiality and affability among different categories of staff (academic/ non-academic) in general, that creates a friendly atmosphere which supports learning. This also helps in the smooth conduct of study programmes.
- The physical environment is generally kept clean and maintained well.
- The main library provides adequate facilities for students and the library staff provides training on utilization of library resources.
- Access to internet through university-wide Wi-Fi is free of charge to students and staff. Thus students have ample opportunity to access on-line learning resources.

- All students (with the exception of some second year students) are eligible for hostel facilities. Many hostels are in university premises and within easy reach of the faculty and other recreational facilities. Hostel premises are clean and well maintained.
- In the hostels, procedures have been put in place for medical emergencies.
- Safety and well-being of students have received adequate consideration by the university authorities. In university round the clock security is provided by Marshalls of the University (internal) as well as a private security service. They function under a chief security officer.
- Students have accessibility to counseling through the Student Counseling Unit which is discreetly identified as “Kalana Mithuru Sevana”. The counseling service consists of several trained counselors and confidentiality is guaranteed.
- Extra facilities are provided to students with special needs based on need analysis and their requests accommodated wherever possible, at policy level and operational level creating an enabling learning environment. All new buildings have disability-access.
- Gender equity and equality is ensured at policy level and implemented.

Weaknesses:

- There is no regulation on the use of free Wi-Fi facility in the university and as observed by the librarian, students use internet access more often to visit social media sites rather than for connected learning. Restrictions placed on data usage would overcome misuse and ensure that the facility is used for educational purposes.
- Although the library is a valuable resource it is not utilized optimally. Subscription for certain e-resources had to be terminated due to poor usage. A proper analysis should be done before ordering journals because at present there are ways gaining access to such resources, for example, through Research Gate.
- There is limited opportunity for students to learn ICT.
- There does not appear to be a strong effort taken in developing soft skills, including English Language skills in students.
- ICCMS maintains academic records of students. However, student progression is not evaluated and fallback options are not given to students who fail to achieve the standards required for the Degree.
- Career Guidance Unit (CGU) and its activities did not seem to have a big impact on students in the degree programmes.
- There was no close collaboration or networking between the departments/ faculty and their alumni and no tracer studies have been undertaken by the academic departments conducting the study programmes. Students were not aware of job prospects or work opportunities stemming from their degree programmes.

Recommendations:

- Improvement of soft skills in students should be given due consideration. It is necessary to enlist the support of DELT, CGU and alumni for this purpose. Available IT resources should be used as efficiently as possible for improving IT skills in students.
- Network with alumni and tap their sources to guide students on career paths and provide opportunities.
- Evaluate student progression and offer options and timely advice for those who encounter difficulties.

Criterion 7: Student Assessments and Awards

Formative and summative assessment methods are practiced in some departments with allocation of marks to different components clearly defined. However, the Department of Sinhala appears to practice mainly summative assessments and that too at the end of the academic year rather than semester-end evaluations. While external examiners are appointed and their comments considered in the determination of final marks/ grades, none of the degree programmes had the practice of providing “marking schemes” for assessment. The reliability of assessment instruments can be improved considerably and disputes in marking clearly resolved if detailed marking schemes are made available. The faculty has a policy of releasing results within three months of holding examinations and the ICCMS makes certain that there are no undue delays. Students can request for a detailed transcript of their results from the ICCMS upon completion of their degree programme with their qualification, Grade Point Average (GPA) and grades achieved in each course module.

Strengths:

- Exam regulations and assessment criteria are clearly defined in the student handbook and examination By-laws.
- Examination procedures, rules and regulations are clearly laid down and staff is made aware of procedures and responsibilities.
- There is university level examinations policy on students with special needs and the faculty provides special consideration on them in terms of seating arrangements and extended time
- A combination of assessment strategies are used, such as assignments, presentations and end of semester examinations in many of the degree programmes.
- In many course modules assessments have been designed in line with course objectives and ILOs, particularly in Study Programmes of Pali, Sanskrit, Buddhist Culture and Buddhist Philosophy.

- In each course module weightage relating to different components of assessment are specified clearly and students are informed in advance.
- Time allocated to different components of a question is specified in question papers which guides students on the level of emphasis that needs to be placed on different parts of a question.
- Internal and external examiners are appointed formally by all academic departments.
- Reports from external examiners are considered in determining the final mark of a candidate.
- Types of examination offences and academic misconduct have been specified in Examination By-laws and punishments have been meted out where laws have been breached.
- Results are released within the stipulated time (within 3 months of holding examinations).
- GPA levels, naming of the degree etc. comply with SLQF level VI.
- A complete transcript is issued giving the qualification, GPA, and grades achieved in each course module within two days of making a request.

Weaknesses:

- ☐ There is no evidence to suggest periodic reviews of assessment strategies.
- ☐ Some Degree Programmes rely too heavily on summative assessments (e.g. Sinhala and Literary Criticism).
- ☐ No marking schemes or model answers are provided to the external examiner by any of the Degree Programmes.

Recommendations:

- ☐ Each examiner must prepare a marking scheme or model answers for question papers that he/ she sets. The marks assigned to individual components of an answer must be given to the external examiner as a guide to second marking.
- ☐ Practice the use formative assessments more often in course modules and periodically review the assessment methods.

Criterion 8: Innovative and Healthy Practices

Collaborations have been established with several foreign universities where staff/ student exchange including credit transfer is possible. Educational centers have been established in different countries including Singapore, China, Malaysia and Hong Kong where courses on Pali, Sanskrit and Buddhist Philosophy are conducted.

The Degree Programmes conducted by the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies attract a number of foreign students each year thus enabling the department and study programmes to contribute strongly towards the generated funds of the University of Kelaniya, and in foreign currency. The programmes offered by these departments, being unique in a global sense, provide the department and the faculty the opportunity to exploit this to enhance their international presence. However, a limitation in attracting foreign students is the lack of accommodation facilities suitable for foreign students. This issue has been recognized now by the authorities and the university is in the process of planning for an international student hostel to be located outside campus and maybe partly funded by the earned income.

ICT based platform (CAL/ LMS) is available for teaching and learning.

Two journals are published fairly regularly by the Departments of Pali & Buddhist Studies and Sanskrit and articles are contributed by both staff and students.

Co-curricular activities including those of cultural and aesthetic value have been promoted.

Strengths:

- ☐ Generation of funds from attracting foreign students to the degree programmes conducted by the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies.
- ☐ Educational field visits are conducted as an integral part of some course modules by all degree programmes. This provides a greater opportunity for student/ staff interaction and out-of-class learning experiences.
- ☐ Students carry out community activities within the framework of their discipline such as organizing meditation practice events in schools.

Weaknesses:

- ☐ Research is conducted by academic staff, but benefits for undergraduate training, collaborations with industry and institutional recognition received by the academics conducting the degree programmes under review were not available.
- ☐ Students are not encouraged to present their research findings in symposia/ conferences or publish in reputed academic journals.
- ☐ There is no organizational entity to promote R & D and outreach activities.
- ☐ There is no evidence of student participation in national level competitions.

Recommendations:

- ☐ Encourage students to publish their research findings in peer reviewed academic journals.

SECTION 6

Grading of Overall Performance of the Programme

The review team evaluated six Honours Degree Programmes in the Faculty of Humanities (Details provided in Section 1). The faculty had presented the degree programmes as a cluster and the SER had been prepared by collating evidences from all six degree programmes together under the eight criteria. The site visit to the faculty was carried out just over three days, from 20 – 22 September 2017. Therefore, the four member review team was pressed for time and it was not possible to evaluate individual degree programmes separately. Since they were presented as a cluster and some supporting evidences were common to all programmes and the fact that the time was limited, the review team decided to provide a single final grade to the cluster of degree programmes.

Based on the assessment method given in the PR Manual the overall score obtained by the Honours Degree Programmes is 77.5%.

The overall performance of the cluster of six Honours Degree Programmes reviewed using the eight criteria is given in the Table below.

Study Programme Score	Actual Criteria-wise Score	Grade	Performance Descriptor	Interpretation of Descriptor
≥ 70%	More than the Minimum weighted score for all eight criteria.	B	Good	Satisfactory level of accomplishment of quality expected of a programme of study; requires improvement in a few aspects.

The final assessment of the performance of the programme of study is that it receives a B Grade with an overall score of 77.5%.

It is noteworthy that the Degree Programmes scored higher than the weighted minimum scores in all eight criteria.

SECTION 7

Commendations and Recommendations

The degree programmes conducted by the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies attracts number of foreign students each year. This adds to the diversity of the student body in the Faculty of Humanities, giving students the space and opportunity to learn from each other and appreciate diverse view points as well as different cultural backgrounds. To have foreign students is economically beneficial also, as it is seen that the department and its study programmes contribute strongly towards the generated funds of the University of Kelaniya, in foreign currency.

Collaborations have been established with several foreign universities in different countries including Singapore, China, Malaysia and Hong Kong in which courses on Pali, Sanskrit and Buddhist Philosophy are conducted and staff and student exchange occur. The programmes offered by these departments, being unique in a global sense, provide the departments and the faculty the opportunity to exploit this to enhance their international presence. Therefore it is recommended to extend such collaborations to universities in the West as well where appreciation of these subject areas is gaining ground.

The Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies is commended for initiating a timely Degree Programme in Buddhist Psychology and Counseling. It is recommended that foreign students be admitted to this programme as well. Further it is recommended to structure the programme in such a way to allow early exits so that students who do not have an interest for in-depth study may finish with a certificate, diploma or higher diploma level qualification.

Department of Sanskrit, although is a small department, must be commended on continuing to uphold the status of the Honours Degree Programme in Sanskrit in the face of many challenges. One main challenge is the inability to enroll students in reasonable numbers (minimum 02 and maximum 07 students were on this programme in the past 5 years). Perhaps the main reason for this is the wrongful view among the present generation of students that Sanskrit is an ancient language which has no relevance in the modern technology driven world. The department voiced their concern over the dearth of Sanskrit scholars and the neglect of this discipline in the country. As a rectifying measure they have requested the UGC to admit an “additional intake” of 35 students to follow the BA in Sanskrit, even from among students who have not offered Sanskrit at ALs. The department is confident that there is a substantial job market for those with BA in Sanskrit, in the teaching profession and other specialized fields. The department’s vision to cater to this national need as well as their effort to sustain the programme must be appreciated.

In the Department of Sinhala, there appears to be a healthy demand for the BA Honours Degree Programme in Sinhala, which shows a steady and substantial increase in student enrolment over the last three years. The opposite is seen with the newly introduced Honours Degree Programme in Literary Criticism where in particular years the number of students registered is as low as 1 or 2. It is recommended that the department takes a serious look at the reasons for students avoiding selecting this programme and take steps to maintain its viability.

In all of the academic departments and degree programmes the level of practice of OBE/ SCL methods is rather inadequate. It is recommended that these methods be utilized much more effectively in order to develop a graduate as envisaged by the Graduate Profile of the Faculty.

One main concern among students was the uncertainty of job prospects. Except in the case of student monks, lay students, particularly in Honours Degree Programme in Sinhala were not convinced that they would find suitable employment even after graduating with First Class Honours. It is very necessary to build confidence in students that they have good career prospects or else they will not select such programmes of study in the future. It appeared that students often preferred the degree programmes offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences to those offered by the Faculty of Humanities purely because of the impression that they believe that there were more job opportunities if they completed a degree in the Social Sciences stream. These may be wrong concepts that have brought about a certain level of disenchantment among students. Thus their fears need to be alleviated. In this regard a lot of support can be obtained from past alumni if they are invited to address students, giving them guidance and direction to identify career paths as well as providing internship opportunities eventually leading to career paths. Therefore it is important to have tracer studies done on past alumni. At present, the students appeared to be somewhat uncertain of their future. CGU could also play a more active and supportive role in connecting students with potential employers. A further setback the students encounter is the need to strengthen their soft skills, particularly the use of English Language. While appreciating that the specific degree programmes are training students on oriental disciplines that would not require the use of English, nevertheless to progress in the world of work and even to disseminate knowledge, English has become an indispensable tool. Therefore, it is a must for all grandaunts to possess a good working knowledge in English.

It is appreciable that gender equity and facilities for students with special needs have been given substantial attention.

SECTION 8

Summary

The six Honours Degree Programmes considered in this review are conducted by three academic departments (Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies, Department of Sanskrit and Department of Sinhala) of the Faculty of Humanities in the University of Kelaniya. The three departments have a good reputation in their respective fields, having existed from the inception of the university. The departments are also well known outside Sri Lanka, particularly in some Far Eastern countries, where they have established collaborations with Higher Educational Institutes.

The University of Kelaniya shows a strong commitment towards maintaining high academic standards and is backed by a strong Internal Quality Assurance Unit. The Faculty of Humanities too has taken several steps to improve quality of its study programmes and has established its own Faculty Quality Assurance Cell. However, it appeared that the FQAC could perform a greater role to facilitate and enhance quality assurance activities in the respective Honours Degree Programmes.

The faculty has progressed well by improving its physical resources since the subject review in 2009. It has acquired new buildings and other physical resources, including good IT facilities and computer laboratories. The most recent revision of the curriculum has seen the degree programmes adopting SLQF guidelines of 2015 and all degree programme are conducted based on course module system, credit ratings and GPAs. The academic departments have well qualified academic staff and each department has senior members with experience in teaching and research. Even though advances have taken place in the development of the degree programmes, course delivery was still seen to be mostly teacher-centered. The facilities available are not put to effective use in any of the degree programmes evaluated for adopting SCL and OBE methods as well as in assessment strategies.

There is affability and cordiality among different categories of staff in general that creates a friendly atmosphere which supports learning. However, in the Six Honours Study Programmes no much room is available for staff-student interactions, except in field based courses and research.

Student enrollment in the Honours Degree Programmes in Sinhala was high but in other programmes it was relatively low, particularly in the Honours Degree Programmes in Literary Criticism and Sanskrit. Department of Sanskrit is in the process of addressing this issue and has requested for an additional intake of students to be trained in Sanskrit. The Department of Sinhala should also look at its Literary Criticism

programme critically, and consider methods of promoting student enrolment to sustain the degree programme.

Students are provided with support for a smooth and trouble-free undergraduate education within the university. The students are reasonably well looked after in terms of hostel accommodation, medical facilities, recreational facilities and other welfare programmes. However, the faculty also needs to consider supporting their graduates when they pass out from the university. At present, students feel that there was no facilitation toward overcoming unemployment and underemployment after completion of the degree programme. In this regard, the respective academic departments and the CGU could play a more active role by networking with alumni/ potential employers or providing academic counseling for undertaking higher studies.

All the six Honours Degree Programmes that were reviewed involve subjects that are distinctive to Sri Lankan culture and religion. Thus the departments are well placed to take advantage of the uniqueness of their disciplines, and offer their programmes to the outside world. It was observed that this is already implemented and MoUs have been signed with several educational institutes in the East. They can build on this strength and may also explore the possibility of making connections with universities in the West that show an interest in Oriental Studies. Within Sri Lanka too, these specific study programmes have no threats from the many private higher educational institutes that have come up as they do not offer courses of this nature. Perhaps, the main threat to some of the study programmes is the student perception that they have limited job opportunities after they graduate. Thus the responsibility lies with the respective academic departments and the Faculty of Humanities to change these view-points.

The six Degree Programmes achieved a B Grade for overall performance in quality based on the eight criteria used for evaluation. The respective academic departments and the faculty need to be congratulated on this achievement, which means that their degree programmes are performing at a satisfactory level of accomplishment of quality. However, they also must be encouraged to strive for further improvement in order to achieve excellence.

The Review Team:

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