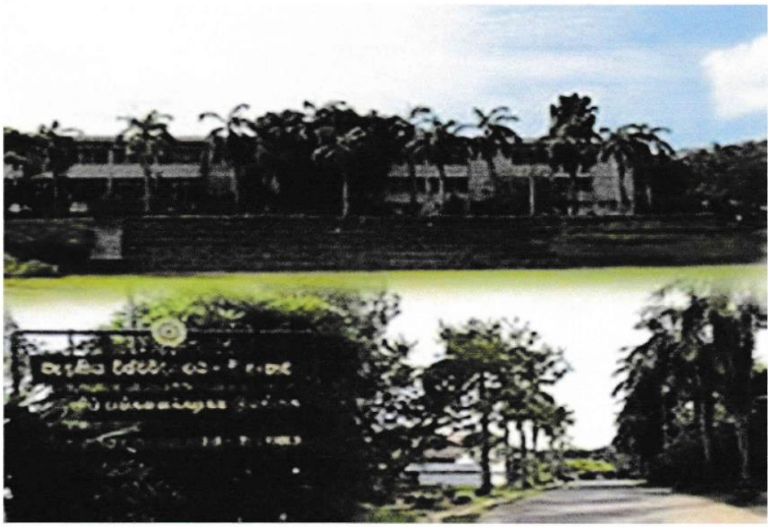
Programme Review Report

Bachelor of Commerce Honours
Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies
Centre for Distance and Continuing Education

University of Kelaniya

Site Visit Date: 14th December 2022



Review Panel: Prof. A. Pushpanathan (Chair)
Prof. (Mrs) F. H. Abdul Rauf
Dr. B. Sunil S. De Silva

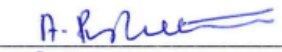
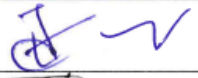
The Quality Assurance Council
University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka

University : University of Kelaniya Sri Lanka

Center : Center for Distance and Continuing Education

Program : Bachelor of Commerce (Special) Degree External

Review Panel :

Name	Signature
Prof. A. Pushpanadan	
Prof. (Mrs) F.H. Abdul Rauf	
Dr. B. Sunil S. De Silva	

Site Visit Date : 14.12.2022

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Section 1: Introduction to the Programme

The University of Kelaniya is a pioneering university in the university system of Sri Lanka. It consists of seven faculties including the Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, and Faculty of Computer and Technologies.

The Department of Commerce and Financial Management (DCFM) is the pioneer in commerce education at the University under the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies. The Bachelor of Commerce Honours degree is the main degree programme offered by the DCFM to undergraduates with different specialization opportunities. In 1993, the Department (Department of Commerce at that time), was able to introduce the Bachelor of Commerce (Special) degree to external students, becoming one of the first two degree programs that offer its education to external students.

Moreover, the Bachelor of Commerce degree is the only special degree program open to external degree students in the Sri Lankan University system. However, the high competition in the territory of the education system in the country and the lack of coordination between the Center for Distance and Continuing Education (CDCE) and the academic departments appeared to be the major constraints in further developing distance education at the University.

The CDCE has the authority to offer External Degree programmes (EDPs) and Extension Courses (ECs) of the university to external students. This academic service of the UoK was introduced in 1993 to fulfill one of the most demanded requirements in the higher education sector, by providing an opportunity for those who are not eligible for entrance to the state university system after their G.C.E Advanced Level (A/L) examination. The service was then offered by the External Examination Division of the University. In the beginning, Bachelor of Arts (General/Special) and Bachelor of Commerce (Special) Degree programs were the only programs offered. Subsequently, two other external degree programs, namely, Bachelor of Human Resources Management (General) and Bachelor of Science (General), were started in 1999.

The CDCE enrolled the students yearly to follow the B.Com (External) Degree Programme.The number of students in the CDCE and the present breakdown of the B. Com (External) degree programme is illustrated in Table 1.1. Presently 336 students are following the B.Com (External) Degree Programme (Male 112 and Female 224). Only 65 students enrolled in the academic year 2012/13 and only 19 students graduated. The graduation percentage is 29.23%.

Table 1.1: Number of students enrolled in the CDCE and B.Com Degree

Academic Year	Number of Students in the CDCE	Number of Students in B.Com Degree
2012 / 13	22400	65
2014	8222	41
2015	7892	85
2016	4587	44
2019	4163	125
2021	2536	49

The DCFM comprises 39 permanent academics. The details of the permanent academics are illustrated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: The details of Academics

Designation	Number
Professors	07
Senior Lecturer Gr.I	11
Senior Lecturer Gr.II	08
Lecturer	05
Lecturer (Probationary)	08

The CDCE is headed by a Director who is appointed by the Vice-Chancellor of the UoK. TheCDCE consists of three main divisions which are the;

- Division of Registration and Examination,
- Division of Learning Resources
- Division of Training

Each division is headed by a Deputy Director. The CDCE is managed by the Management Committee (MC) and the committee is appointed by the Council of the University according to the guidelines prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC), for a period of three years.

The following infrastructure facilities and other support services are available for students of the B.Com (Special) External Degree Programme.

- Information about programmes and ODL
- Computer Center
- Laboratory
- Study Material ready on time
- Face - to - face contact sessions
- Response to queries
- Feedback on assignments
- Counseling

Section 2: Review Team's Observations on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The review team noted that the SER has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines given in the Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses, by a team of writers headed by a team lead, under the guidance of the Dean, Head of the Department, Director CQA, and the Director CDCE as well as the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kelaniya initiated the preparation of the SER. She had the initial discussion with the Director of CDCE and the Director of CQA and the letter of intent for EDPs and ECs review was sent to the UGC. Subsequently, five senior academic staff members were nominated for participation in the workshop for SER writers. The Director CQA in consultation with the VC, Dean, and the Director CDCE requested the Heads of the participating departments offering the relevant external degree program to appoint an SER writing team. A team leader was also nominated to provide the necessary guidance in the process of SER writing. The approval for the writing teams, TORs for team leaders and team members as nominated by the HoD and the work plan of SER preparation were developed and the necessary approval was obtained from the Management Committee (MC) and the Senate.

The SER writing team of the B.Com degree program consisted of the team leader, coordinator for each criterion and supporting staff. The SER writing team of the B.Com degree programme called regular meetings to discuss matters arising, review write-ups and provide the necessary feedback for improvements. The first progress review meeting was held on 18. 09. 2021 with the team lead of SER writing and Director CQA. Preparation of the first draft was completed by 12.10.2021 and further editing was done by sharing the experience of the SER writing team. The second progress review meeting was held on 14. 10. 2021 with the participation of all the teams. Write-ups of each criterion were regularly reviewed by the Director and the former Director of CQA and improved accordingly. The second draft was edited and the coding system was screened by the editing team members on 22.12.2021. The final draft of the SER was completed on 29.12.2021. The progress of the SER preparation was reported to the Faculty Board of Commerce and Management Studies by the team leader. In addition, the progress of the SER was reported to the regular Management Committee meeting.

The report, in general, has followed all the guidelines in the format for the preparation of the self-evaluation report specified in the manual. The report has an executive summary, general information, introduction to the study programme explaining the overview of the Faculty and the programme of study. Part 01 describes the profile of the institution and part 02 describes the criterion-wise evaluation report. The report also contains a SWOT analysis. As this is the first review of the external degree programme, the report did not describe any

changes. The report has used the template given in the manual. The table covers a serial number of the standard, claims of compliance, documentary evidence to support each claim of compliance and codes of the evidence used. The length of the report is fairly good. It is self-explanatory and readily understandable. In general, it is prepared to align with the standards of formatting recommended in the manual.

Section 3: A Brief Description of the Review Process

The University Grants Commission (UGC) in agreement with the authorities of the programme of study to be reviewed, decides on a review team as well as a schedule for the review. The review team was guided by Prof. Tilak P. D. Gamage, Director of Quality Assurance, UGC, Sri Lanka, who explained the way of conducting a review and the objectives of the review according to the Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses offered by universities. This has been approved by the UGC and is adopted for use for assuring the quality of programmes and courses offered by External Degree Programme (EDP) Centers of Conventional Universities, in July 2014. Further, the review was conducted on an online platform and therefore the QAC has given training on the review platform and site visit on 08th September 2022 at 9.30 am and 16th November 2022 at 10.00 am respectively via ZOOM.

The Department of Commerce and Financial Management (DCFM) of the Faculty of Commerce and Management (FCM) Studies applied for review of the Bachelor of Commerce (Special) External Degree, which is the main degree program offered by the DCFM to undergraduates, through the Centre for Distance and Continuing Education (CDCE), University of Kelaniya. Accordingly, the UGC appointed the following review team of three members based on their expertise:

Prof. A. Pushpanathan - Chair
Prof. (Mrs.) F. H. Abdul Rauf - Member
Dr. B. Sunil S. De Silva - Member

The self-assessment report of the said programme was made available to the review team on 21st September 2022. Accordingly, the online desk evaluation was done by the review team members individually, based on the information provided by the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and was completed on 30th September 2022. The initial meeting of the review team was scheduled and conducted on 26th November 2022 at 6.00 pm via Zoom and the results of the desk evaluation reports were discussed.

The review team divided the six broad sections of the Programme Review Report (PRR) to finish the work efficiently and effectively and allocated tasks for every member of the team. In addition, the team discussed the overall programme of study score of each member of the panel and the performance of the programme study. In the end, the team decided to finalize the documentary evidence during the site visit. After the desk evaluation, the review team identified individuals as well as groups they wished to meet during the site visit. Further, the Alumni Association meeting was also held on 12th December 2022 at 6.00 pm

via Zoom before the site visit. The meeting report and attendance of the alumni association are attached in Annexure 1 and Annexure 2. After the Alumni Association meeting, review members met again and discussed and analyzed the criteria that were allocated to each member.

The team stayed at Pegasus Reef Hotel, Hendala, Wattala., on 13th December 2022. On the same day, at 7.00 pm the review team met at the hotel and further discussed and came to common agreements. Accordingly, the review team prepared for the site visit on 14th December 2022. The team reached the office of the Vice - Chancellor and the review team was welcomed by the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Bursar, and Director, Centre for Quality Assurance (CQA) and agreed to move forward with the agreed schedule for the entire day of the 14th December 2022 (Annexure 3).

The Review team had discussions with the following key persons during the review process.

- Vice Chancellor
- Registrar
- Bursar
- Director/ CQA
- Dean/Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies
- Coordinator of FQAC
- Head /Department of Commerce and Financial Management
- Cluster chair – SER Preparation
- All Academic Staff of the Department
- Administrative staff
- Director/CDCE and the staff of CDCE
- Deputy Directors of CDCE
- Students of the study programmes
- Librarian
- Senior Assistant Registrar of CDCE
- Senior Assistance Bursar/CDCE
- Non-academic staff members

On 14th December 2022, the review team had the opening meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Bursar, Director/Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU), Coordinator/CDCE Quality Assurance Cell (Annexure 4). The Vice-Chancellor informed the standard, quality, and quality assurance programme of the University and the recent developments and programmes conducted by CDCE.

Subsequently, the review team met the Director / CQA with the Coordinator/IQAC of CDCE, and the Coordinator / IQAC Admin (Annexure 5). She explained the process of quality assurance and further informed that the activities that were recently initiated related to the CDCE with the assistance of the Coordinator/IQAC of CDCE. The Dean, Head of Department and academic staff are keen on improving the quality of academic programmes and allied activities. The Coordinator/IQAC of CDCE also responded to the queries from the review team.

Thereafter, the review team met the Dean, /FCMS, Head/ DCFM, and the Head / HRM at the Boardroom of the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies (Annexure 6). The Dean made a PowerPoint presentation regarding quality, standards, the strength of academic staff members, staff-student ratio, academic workload, the demand of the programme, and the collaboration with CDCE.

Then, there was a meeting with the SER writing team in the Board Room of the Faculty (Annexure 7). At this meeting, the SER writing team members explained the respective

study programme and the coordination with CDCE to offer the programme. Next, the review team met the academic staff of the DCFM (Annexure 8). The academic staff explained that they are offering their services to the degree programme.

Then, the review team had a meeting with administrative staff members of the CDCE including the Director and the Deputy Directors (Annexure 9). At the meeting with the administrative staff, the issues related to the coordination and other administrative matters were highlighted and discussed and this was followed by a meeting with the Senior Assistant Registrar and the Assistant Bursar of the CDCE (Annexure 10)

Then the review team visited facilities available for students such as Registration and Examination, Division of Learning Resources, Computer Centre, Counselling, Library, and the Common facilities at CDCE and the team gathered information regarding the quality of teaching, availability of welfare facilities, workload of the programme and other services provided by the CDCE. Then, the team discussed with a cross-section of administrative support staff Technical Support/ Non-academic staff and other support staff at CDCE (Annexure 11). The review team went through the documents to verify the documentary evidence as given under the six criteria of the self-assessment report within all the meetings where necessary.

After all those meetings and document verification, the review team had a discussion to finalize the site visit review process and prepared for the wrap-up meeting. The wrap-up meeting was conducted with the Dean, Head of the Department, Director/CDCE, Deputy Directors of CDCE, Director CQA, Coordinator of the SER team, and Coordinator for IQAC of

the CDCE (Annexure 12). The Chair of the review team informed the strengths and weaknesses of the programme based on the review and obtained more comments. The review team observed that the review process is well coordinated as the schedules are organized properly by the FCM, DCFM and CDCE. Great hospitality, collecting documentary evidence and coordinating all the events to complete the task were appreciated by the team. In addition, the friendly working environment provided to the review team during the process is much appreciated by the review team.

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

The Centre for Quality Assurance of the University of Kelaniya was established under the Quality Assurance Centre By-Law No. 1 of 2015, as the successor of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit, which was first established in the University in 2005. Professor (Mrs) Priyanganie Senanayake is the Director of the CQA, and is guided by the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance SSC - QA. The Senate Standing Committee is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor of the University and is constituted as per the guidelines issued by the University Grants Commission in this regard. The Deputy Registrar/ Academic functions as the Secretary to the Committee.

The CQA has conducted a series of workshops that are helpful on different academic scopes in introducing quality assurance, to improve the levels of quality of different faculties, administrative Divisions and the CDCE. All the Faculty Quality Assurance Cells (FQACs), and Administrative Division Cells are expected to take responsibility for implementing the above policies.

The students are given study guides or course outlines of the course units offered during the year at its beginning. The academic members of the DCFM have been trained on how to write course descriptions, modules or units, but constructive alignment is yet to be done. The DCFM has already initiated revising the syllabi of this degree programme, incorporating details such as new assessment methods, learning outcomes, prerequisites and the attributes of graduates. Recently, the CDCE has provided well-being services (Lactating point) to female students who have babies. During the examination time, they can look after their baby at the Centre. Finally, the review team is quite happy about the quality assurance process of the CDCE of the University of Kelaniya.

Section 5: Judgment on the Six Criteria of Programme Review

Criterion 1: Governance and Management

Among the 25 standards, 05 scored 3 indicating good adoption, 18 scored 2 indicating adequate adoption with a few issues, and 2 scored 1 indicating barely adequate adoption with major issues either in the degree of adoption or the strength of evidence provided. The study programme achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 50 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 100 out of 150.

The EDP complies with the guidelines stipulated in the "Handbook on EDP and ECs". The vision and the mission statement of the university provide overall direction for the external degree programmes. The Action Plan of the CDCE is prepared in line with the university's vision and mission statements. All external degree programmes come under the CDCE which is headed by a director. The CDCE is responsible for all the administrative activities related to the external degree programmes. Moreover, the CDCE lacks coordination with the respective department that offers degree programmes to deliver the programmes. All the procedures related to external degree programmes are communicated to students through various means including the handbook and website of the CDCE. The CDCE operates on a self-financed basis and programme budgets are prepared for each degree programme based on zero-based budgeting, and all finance-related activities are subject to the approval of the Finance Committee of the University.

The following specific strengths and weaknesses have been identified in governance and management:

Strengths

1. Fund allocation for CDCE is satisfactory.
2. The CDCE fairly complies with the handbook on EDP.
3. The CDCE has a mission statement.
4. The Board of Study conducts regular meetings.
5. The CDCE has a grievance redress mechanism.
6. An external consultant was appointed to review the curriculum.
7. The University follows the HR policy.
8. Admission and selection criteria for EDPs are consistent with the UGC circular.
9. Qualified academic, administrative, and academic support staff are employed.
10. The CDCE has an effective transparent financial management system

Weaknesses

1. The minutes of the meetings of the Management Committee and Board of Study are not properly documented.
2. The CDCE has not recognized or established a partnership with state or non-state institutions for academic purposes.
3. Could not find the annual report of the CDCE.
4. The information provided in the Handbook and prospectus are not adequate.
5. The Staff Development Centre (SDC) conducted many workshops and seminars but adequate details are not provided.
6. Although feedback forms are available, there is no evidence for completing them.
7. Student feedback forms are available. However, feedback information is not analyzed and presented.
8. Inadequate interaction and contribution from stakeholders in preparing the policy for internal mechanisms.
9. Channels of communication and coordination between management, faculty, and staff, current and past learners are not effective.
10. The inadequate internal mechanism for QA. The IQAC for CDCE has not been established as per the guidelines. Evidence for regular meetings, monitoring and evaluation is not found.

Criterion 2: Programme Design and Organization

Concerning programme design and organization, among the 13 standards, none achieved a score of 3, and 06 standards achieved a score of 2 and 07 standards achieved a score of 1, indicating major issues in either the quality maintained in relation to those standards or the strength of evidence provided. The study programme achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 19 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 48.72 out of 100.

The Programme is aligned with the mission, goals and objectives of the University and the Faculty and it is integrated into the Corporate Plan of the Faculty and University. The course structure of the Degree Programme is logically designed and is clearly described in the handbook.

The whole degree programme offers a total of 90 credits. This aligns with the SLQF requirement of a General Degree. However, programme Design and Development are not fully compliant with the stipulated guidelines of SLQF level 5. The programme has included industrial training. The review team observed that curriculum revision was made just before the SLQF guidelines were issued in September 2015. Therefore, they were not able to fully comply with all the guidelines of SLQF. The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of the programme are based on the graduate profile and they are somewhat aligned with the

programme objectives. However, proper alignment of the graduate profile, Programme LOs, course ILOs and teaching learning and assessment strategy was not apparent with the Systematic Curriculum Matrix. Further, information on the senate approved curriculum design policy or Programme Specification Template of the Faculty was not available for observation.

Following specific strengths and weaknesses have been identified in programme design and development:

Strengths

1. Presence of Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Evaluation Committee (CULTEC) and Faculty Curriculum and Development Committee.
2. The Programme has the component of industrial training.
3. Curriculum revision has commenced in 2021.
4. Attempted revision of curricula and adoption of SLQF.

Weaknesses

1. The Curriculum has not been revised since 2013.
2. Weak compliance to SLQF with the Systematic Curriculum Matrix.
3. Lack of written curriculum development policy.
4. Inadequate regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme through a regular and structured feedback mechanism and inadequate use of feedback from employers, alumni, current students and other stakeholders.
5. Graduate profiles are not developed.
6. No structured mechanisms or attempts were made to review the programme at mid-point or during the life-cycle to assess the effectiveness of the EDP
7. Inadequate documentation of programme specifications and approved policy for credit accumulation and transfer.
8. Lack of revised curriculum document with complete programme and course specifications
9. Though an academic calendar was prepared at the beginning of every year, there is no evidence for following them exactly.
10. Although external experts were appointed in 2017, there is no evidence for receiving review reports.

Criterion 3: Course Design and Development

The course design and development criterion include 16 standards, and 2 standards achieved a score of 3, and 7 standards achieved a score of 2 indicating barely adequate

quality with some issues about the quality in relation to those standards. 07 standards achieved a score of 1 indicating major issues in either the quality maintained in relation to those standards or the strength of evidence provided. The study programme achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 27 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 140.63 out of 250.

The degree programme has introduced all courses either as 3 credits or 2 credits courses as mentioned in the handbook. The review team noticed that the course design and development template was not available for observation. Further, the alignment of ILOs with the content, teaching, learning and assessment tasks could not be observed for all courses due to the unavailability of adequate evidence. Course design specifies credit values but they are not detailed as face-to-face contact hours, fieldwork, self-learning hours, etc. The courses provide a variety of learning strategies such as collaborative learning, creative and critical learning, self-directed learning, etc. The academic staff uses multi-media, audio recording and other technologies and the use of LMS among staff and students is commendable.

Course design integrates appropriate learning strategies. Further, there is no approved course design and development template. Course outlines for all courses are issued to the students. Course contents have adequate breadth and depth and the details of these are provided in the course specifications.

Feedback from students was obtained. However, course evaluation reports for the last three years were not available. Although credit weight and volume of learning are structured as per the SLQF guidelines, there is no proper curriculum map available in the Faculty. Academic staff is given training by the SDC. However, more training in relation to curriculum development and mapping on SLQF guidelines would be beneficial. Monitoring and review process on course design seems to be done whenever necessary However, systematic documentation was not available as evidence. The Faculty should develop systematic course approval criteria. Feedback from students and staff is obtained. Although consideration of feedback in designing course design and development seems to be in place, the team could not find any written evidence for that. Therefore, the review team strongly recommends maintaining proper documentation of every activity of the Faculty. It was evident that the curriculum of the programme was approved by the Faculty Curriculum Development Committee and CULTEC, Faculty Board, and the Senate before its implementation.

The following specific strengths and weaknesses have been identified in course design and Development.

Strengths

1. Courses are designed to meet the programme ILOs
2. Most of the courses were designed to have proper content, learning activities and assessments.
3. Courses were designed to promote student-centered teaching strategies.
4. Course specifications were developed for some courses.
5. Courses were developed to promote appropriate learning strategies such as self-directed learning, collaborative learning, creative thinking, interpersonal communication and teamwork.
6. Courses were delivered with appropriate media and technology (ICT).
7. Teaching and Learning (T&L) methods/processes are geared towards achieving the graduate attributes.

Weaknesses

1. Lack of proper alignment of the existing programme and future programmes with the standards stipulated in SLQF
2. Lack of course specifications for all courses in the revised curriculum.
3. Courses need to be designed with the participation of all the stakeholders.
4. The alumni need to play a more active role in course design and implementation.
5. Lack of a revised curriculum document with complete programme and course specifications.
6. Course design does not integrate continuous assessment methods.
7. There is no pathway available to the students to acquire credit for prior learning to meet the needs of students.
8. New courses need to be introduced to address the present context, e.g., managerial skills development, socio-political environment, accounting information systems, personal and professional development, computerized accounting, and theory and practice of baking.

Criterion 4: Infrastructure and Learning Resources

Among the 10 standards, 04 scored 3 indicating good adoption, 05 scored 2 indicating adequate adoption with a few issues, and 01 scored 1 indicating barely adequate adoption with major issues, either in the degree of adoption or the strength of evidence provided. The study programme achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 23 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 115 out of 150.

The University has provided the CDCE with enough infrastructure facilities including ICT facilities and human resources for the effective and efficient administration of the degree programme. The staff of the CDCE are provided with sufficient ICT facilities and media

conference facilities. Based on the annual procurement plan, the CDCE purchases and maintains the required infrastructure facilities through a proper mechanism. The University recruited qualified and competent staff according to the government /UGC recruitment circulars and procedures and allocated an adequate number of staff to the CDCE.

The following specific strengths and weaknesses have been identified in infrastructure and learning resources:

Strengths

1. The CDCE has adequate infrastructure facilities.
2. Minutes of the finance committee and expenditures statement of the CDCE are available.
3. Recruitment, retention and promotion criteria are available.
4. The CDCE has a policy for appointing resource persons.
5. The budget for the degree programme is available.
6. The CDCE has adequate staff to support EDP and learners.

Weaknesses

1. Reports of need analysis and survey reports are not available.
2. No evidence for documentation of the performance review report.
3. Although CDCE conducted seminars and workshops, there is no evidence of participation.
4. Many documents are not authorized with the signature of the authorized person.
5. The CDCE does not conduct regular meetings with course coordinators
6. The CDCE has no proper monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure the quality of infrastructure facilities.

Criterion 5: Learner Support and Progression

Among the 12 standards, none scored 3 indicating good adoption, 05 scored 2 indicating adequate adoption with a few issues, and 07 scored 1 indicating barely adequate adoption with major issues, either in the degree of adoption or the strength of evidence provided. The study programme achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 17 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 94.44 out of 200.

The CDCE maintains an up-to-date comprehensive database of all currently enrolled students of admission, academic, financial and examination records to make appropriate decisions on learner support through the SIS. The CDCE provides orientation sessions for new learners about ODL immediately after admission. During the orientation, the CDCE

provides the students Handbook to the newly admitted students and issues the feedback form to the students for collecting the opinion of the degree programme. But the CDCE failed to analyze the feedback form. The CDCE offers appropriate academic support to learners through the provision of bridging courses, by conducting face –to - face seminars and providing additional material including lecture recordings, discussion questions, self-directed assignments, and study guides on the LMS.

Strengths

1. Learners are supported by a Learning Management System (LMS) (CDCE SIS).
2. The Programme commences with the orientation session.
3. Student Handbook and B. Com Syllabus are available.
4. Year Planner for CDCE and seminar schedule are available**.**

Weaknesses

1. Learner support using a range of media is not considered (comprehensive information package, contact sessions, peer support, academic and personnel counseling, online help)
2. Potential delivery strategies are not commonly used (audio-video tapes, radio and TV, teleconferencing, computer-based conferencing, online learning)
3. Instructors are given orientation, but no proper support in their role as distance educators and /or online mentoring and tutoring.
4. Systems to enable interactions between instructors and learners, and between learners using various forms of technology are not properly developed and maintained.
5. When teachers are used to online learning, they are well qualified and experienced for their roles in the online learning environment, which is not clear.
6. Turnaround of assignments that ensures timely feedback is not happening (According to alumni feedback).
7. Progression and completion rates are not properly monitored by concerning institutional or national targets.
8. The institution did not establish and publish acceptable student progress, retention, graduation and employment rates.
9. Even though the institution has some formal and informal mechanisms to obtain feedback from learners on the efficiency and effectiveness of its processes, the findings are not incorporated into decision-making and planning.
10. Overall learner support system did not target retention and provide preventative support.

Criterion 6: Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards

Among the 13 standards, none scored 3 indicating good adoption, 09 scored 2 indicating adequate adoption with a few issues, and 04 scored 1 indicating barely adequate adoption with major issues, either in the degree of adoption or the strength of evidence provided. The study programme achieved a raw criterion-wise score of 22 and hence an actual criterion-wise score of 84.61 out of 150.

The degree programme has been developed in accordance with the SLQF guidelines and assessment strategies are incorporated to achieve the PLOs at the programme development stage. Different forms of self-learning activities have been designed and uploaded to the LMS page of each course unit as a compulsory requirement. Assessment and all examination activities including paper setting, moderation, and marking are done by the DCFM and examination and record keeping of the degree programme are maintained by the CDCE.

The CDCE conducts seminars on each course unit for students and regularly gets their feedback on the teaching, learning and assessment and promotes student learning involvement. The LMS page of each course unit provides facilities for students to communicate with teaching staff relating to self-learning activities and send their feedback on the uploaded LMS materials. The CDCE takes necessary actions against the deselected examination malpractices and misconducts timely and justifiable manner as recommended by the Examination Malpractices Committee. The CDCE follows the assessment standards that are benchmarked against the SLQF which is in line with the national university system.

Strengths

1. Bylaws, rules and regulations are available for examinations.
2. Examiners list, examination reports and mark sheets are available.
3. LMS guidance, Student handbook and CDCE website support and display some of the information and guidance of the evaluation process.

Weaknesses

1. CDCE, University of Kelaniya did not properly pay due recognition to assessment as the key motivator to learning and an integral part of the teaching and learning process, as no continuous formative assessment with timely good quality constructive feedback contributed to a supportive environment throughout the course of study.
2. Mechanisms are not in place for monitoring assessment practices and their impact on student learning experiences and outcomes.
3. Assessment/examination results are not communicated without delay to all learners adhering to the scheduled timelines (Alumni feedback).

4. The institution has not properly developed a policy and mechanism to regularly monitor student progress through a course to provide managers with data on which to decide whether they need to intervene in the running of a course and avert problems.
5. The institution has no clear mechanism and procedure for the collection, analysis and interpretation of information about any aspect of a programme of study, particular courses within a programme, as part of a recognized process of judging the outcomes of the programme including its effectiveness.

Section 6: Grading of Overall Performance of the Programme

The evaluation given here is the review team's assessment of the level of accomplishment of quality expected of the Bachelor of Commerce Special (External) degree programme, based on the grading of overall performance as per guidelines given in Chapter 4, Table 4.3 of PR manual.

Table 6.1 Assessment Criteria and Score

No.	Criteria	Weightage on a thousand scale	Minimum weighted score	Actual criterion-wise score
1	Governance and Management	150	60	100.00
2	Programme Design and Organization	100	40	48.72
3	Course Design and Development	250	100	140.63
4	Infrastructure and Learning Resources	150	60	115.00
5	Learner Support and Progression	200	80	94.44
6	Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards	150	60	84.62
	Total score (out of 1000)			583.41
	Total score (out of 100)			58.34

Final Grade: C

The minimum level of academic accomplishment expected of an institution: requires improvement.

Section 7: Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

- The strong commitment of the Vice Chancellor, Dean, and Heads of Departments in adopting quality culture within the faculty and its programmes.
- Arrangements were made for the programme review process and a site visit by the University, Faculty and CDCE.
- The CDCE has adequate infrastructure facilities
- The commitment of the Faculty administration and staff to promote a quality culture within the faculty and efforts taken to internalize best practices.
- Presence of a well-composed action, strategic plans and strategic goals
- Excellent teaching and learning environment
- Presence of several committees for each common activity of the Faculty
- Possession of strong academic staff with a high profile
- Adoption of a student-centered learning approach
- Provision of information to students about the academic programmes, learning resources and learner support system through the Student Handbook and Orientation Programme at the time of their registration into the academic programmes.
- Student-friendly environment
- Presence of a very well composed Students Handbook
- The presence of very good online registration
- Availability of LMS on which the CDCE can launch a more students centered study programme
- The CDCE generates a large income from the external degree programme
- Having a component of industrial training in the curriculum
- The process of selection and enrolment of students is well regulated

Recommendations

- Adopt a full range of SLQF guidelines in future curriculum revisions
- Continue with the efforts in adopting and internalizing all best practices prescribed in the Quality Manual in all spheres of the CDCE activities
- Update the Handbook with the inclusion of criteria and method of assessment for industrial training as the current version does not provide sufficient details on this aspect
- Internalize the procedures and processes of the external mode of offering degrees.
- Identify a mechanism to determine the time that an academic should/ could devote to external programmes, to maintain a balance in the time spent between internal and external programmes.

- Take urgent action to deliver the programmes within the stipulated time.
- Make learning resources and student support available to external degree students as early as possible.
- Maintain parity of esteem of both internal and external degrees by maintaining the quality of learning and certification.
- Establish a fully functional IQAC at the CDCE as per the quality manual
- Develop appropriate coordination between faculty, staff and CDCE.
- Revise all course specifications with the inclusion of facilities required for teaching and learning and include assessment strategy in the course specification for practical training component in line with SLQF guidelines
- Consider introducing fallback and existing options for the students who fail to complete the study programme successfully
- Programme-level graduate profile and the ILOs need revision to fully comply with SLQF level 5 guidelines
- Establish a comprehensive 360-degree formal staff appraisal system including teaching, research and other contributions for the motivation of staff members
- Systematic Tracer Studies on career progression and academic advancement of alumni need to be carried out.
- Benchmark the study programme with other national standards
- Develop and maintain documentation for every activity related to the degree programme
- Collaborate with external training institutions.
- Include formative assessment in the evaluation criteria.
- Learner support using a range of media is not considered (comprehensive information package, contact sessions, peer support, academic and personnel counselling, online help)

Section 8: Summary

The B.Com (Special) external degree programme underwent the review for the first time under the quality assurance system of the UGC. The UGC and QAC, in agreement with the University, Faculty and the CDCE entrusted the review task to a team of three members. In this process, the evaluators engaged in an individual desk review and site visit evaluation. A site visit schedule was prepared by the review team chair and it was finalized in agreement with the team members and the CDCE (Schedule is annexed 1). According to the schedule, the site visit was successfully conducted on 14.12.2022.

The team noticed that the CDCE has 96,608 external undergraduates. It generates a large income. It also enjoys a location - specific advantage which provides easy access to industry and practical training opportunities for students. The location also provides an excellent environment that is conducive to academic pursuits, scholarly work, socio-cultural activities, innovative thinking and research. Further, it is blessed with many trained, committed academic staff. The review team observed that the University uses a participatory approach in the decision -making process. The academic staffs of the Faculty is given their due respect and are provided with the highest moral support by the dedicated leadership of the Dean of the Faculty and the Head of the Department.

The review team observed that the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies (FCMS) and Centre for Distance and Continuing Education (CDCE) of the University of Kelaniya implemented several good practices as described in the Review Manual of the University Grant Commission Sri Lanka to maintain its quality. The organizational structure and operational units of the CDCE are appropriate for its operations and are governed by the principles of participation and transparency. Further, the team observed that the faculty has a well - qualified academic staff competent in designing, developing and delivering academic programmes and is doing praiseworthy work.

Based on the review results, overall strengths and weaknesses were discussed at the final wrap-up session. Finally, the team would like to appreciate the support given by the UGC, QAC, and especially Faculty, and CDCE of the University of Kelaniya for this important process of programme review. Also, the review team focused on and suggested some specific concerns listed under the commendations and recommendations. These concerns will help to improve the quality of the degree programme.

In conclusion, the degree programmes offered by the CDCE have shown satisfactory compliance with best practices. Therefore, the review team has given its judgment based on the overall performance score of 58.34% and recommended awarding the Grade of “C” for

B.Com. External degree programme which is interpreted as “Minimum level of academic accomplishment expected of an institution; requires improvement”.

Site Visit Schedule

Annexure 3

Programme Review – Site Visit

Bachelor of Commerce (Special) Degree Program
Centre for Distance and Continuing Education
University of Kelaniya
Schedule Date 14th December 2022

Time	Activity	Venue
8.30 - 9.00 a.m.	Meeting with Vice Chancellor, Registrar and Bursar	Vice Chancellor's Office
9.00 – 10.00 a.m.	Meeting with Director / CQA, Coordinator / IQAC of CDCE	CQA Office
10.00 – 10.15 am	Tea	Dalugama premises
10.15 – 10.45 am	Meeting with Dean and Head of the Department	Board Room, FCMS
10.45 - 11.30	Meeting with SER writing team	Board Room, FCMS
11.30 – 12.00	Meeting with Academic Staff (excluding Director and Deputy Directors)	Board Room, FCMS
12.00 – 1.00	Lunch	CDCE, Kiribathgoda
1.00 – 1.30	Meeting with the Director, Deputy Directors of CDCE	CDCE, Kiribathgoda
1.30 – 2.00	Meeting with the Senior Assistant Registrar and Assistant Bursar of the CDCE	CDCE, Kiribathgoda
2.00 – 2.30	Observing facilities relevant to the degree programme	Registration and Examination, Division of Learning Resources, Division of Training
2.30 – 3.00	Observing facilities relevant to the degree programme	Laboratory, Computer Centre, Counselling, Library, Common facilities at CDCE
3.00 – 3.30	Meeting with Academic Support and Non Academic Staff of the CDCE	CDCE, Kiribathgoda
3.30 – 3.45	Tea	CDCE, Kiribathgoda
3.45 – 4.15	Discussion among the review team members	FCMS Board Room
4.15 – 5.00	Wrap-up Meeting (Dean, Head of the Department, Directors, Deputy Directors, Director CQA, Coordinator FQAC, Coordinator for IQAC of the CDCE)	FCMS Board Room