



PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORT



**Bachelor of Science
Faculty of Applied Sciences
South Eastern University of Sri Lanka**

Site Visit Dates: 12-13 September, 2022



**Review Panel: Prof. KS Hemachandra (Chair)
Prof. (Mrs.) M Senthilnathanan
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**The Quality Assurance Council
University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka**

University: South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

- 1. Faculty: Faculty of Applied Sciences**
- 2. Program: Bachelor of Science (General Degree Programme)**

Review Panel:

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Date : 12.09.2022- 13.09.2022	

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List of Abbreviations

BSc (GD)	Bachelor of Science (General Degree)
CDC	Curriculum Development Committee
CGEE	Center for Gender Equity and Equality
CGU	Career Guidance Unit
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSR	Cooperate Social Responsibility
DELT	Department of English Language Teaching
FAS	Faculty of Applied Sciences
FB	Faculty Board
FQAC	Faculty Quality Assurance Cell
GEE	Gender Equity and Equality
IC	Industrial Cell
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	Intended Learning Outcomes
IQAU	Internal Quality Assurance Unit
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
OBE	Outcome Based Education
OER	Open Educational Resources
PILOs	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
PR	Programme Review
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
SBS	Subject Benchmark Statement
SC	Science Center
SCL	Student Centered Learning
SDC	Staff Development Center
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SEUSL	South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
SGBV	Sex and Gender Based Violence
SLQF	Sri Lanka Qualification Framework
SOP	Standard Operational Procedures
UBL	University Business Linkage
UGC	University Grants Commission
VC	Vice Chancellor
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

Section 1: The Programme Under Review

South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) was established in 1996, at Addalaichenai, in Ampara district with two faculties: Faculty of Arts & Culture and Faculty of Management and Commerce. Subsequently, both faculties were shifted to Oluvil in 1998. The Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS) was established at Sammanthurai in 1997. The Faculty of Applied Sciences now offers a three-year General Degree programme (GD) and four-year Honours Degree programmes (HD) in Applied Biology, Botany, Applied Statistics, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics and Applied Sciences. There are five academic departments: Departments of Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematical Sciences in FAS and all the departments contribute to the BSc General degree programme (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Academic contributions of the Departments of Faculty of Applied Sciences for the BSc General degree programme

Faculty	Department	No. of courses	No. of credits
Faculty of Applied Science	Physical Sciences	39	60
	Chemical Sciences	24	33
	Biological Sciences	21	36
	Computer Science	18	26
	Mathematical Sciences	53	82
Faculty of Arts	Department of English	06	06
	Language Teaching		

The Faculty of Applied Sciences has 42 academic members with the composition of four professors, 18 senior lecturers (Grade I and II), and 19 probationary and unconfirmed lecturers (Table 1.2). No senior professors or associate professors among the academic staff at the time of review. There are 47 members in non-academic staff including four technical officers, ten lab attendants, and 11 work aids to support the students in the degree programmes. In addition, administrative and associated staff are in operation, consisting of 16 members.

Table 1.2: The number of academic members and their academic training who contribute for the BSc General Degree programme in FAS.

Academic carder	Number of academic Members in the Departments of FAS									
	Physical Sci.		Chemical Sci.		Mathematical Sci.		Biological Sci.		Computer Sci.	
	PhD	MPhil/ MSc	PhD	MPhil/ MSc	PhD	MPhil/ MSc	PhD	MPhil/ MSc	PhD	MPhil/ MSc
Professors					02		01		01	
Senior Lecturers (I and II)	05		03	01	02	02	01	02	01	01
Lecturers			01				01	01		01
Lecturers (Probationary)		04		01		06		03		02
Senior Educational Assistant						01				
Temp. Lecturers		01				01		02		01
Temp. Demonstrators		06		05		05		07		03

The BSc (General) degree programme includes compulsory courses (82 credits), optional courses (8-12 credits) and auxiliary courses (6 credits). The total of 90 credits are divided among 153 courses, as 73 one-credit courses, 78 two-credit courses, and 2 three-credit courses. The courses are offered across all 6 semesters with an average credit weight of 15-16 credits per semester (Figure 1). Compulsory research is not included into the programme as the nature of the degree programme. The students have a wide range of options to select 8-12 credits among the 23 optional courses. Industrial training is incorporated as a two-credit elective course. The programme runs over 6 semesters, in 3 academic years.

Over a five-year period (2014/15- 2018/19), on average 203 students have been admitted to the BSc programmes per year and the student intake has been gradually increased. Four hundred students have graduated during 2012/13 - 2015/16. Of the students entered to FAS, on average 42% students follow the BSc GD programme, graduating 86 students per year on average (Table 1.3). Their performance is given in Table 1.4. Of the current student population in BSc (GD) programme, 47.6% students are Sinhalese, while Tamil and Muslim student percentages are 14.2 and 36.3% respectively. The majority of the student population is female, representing 69 %.

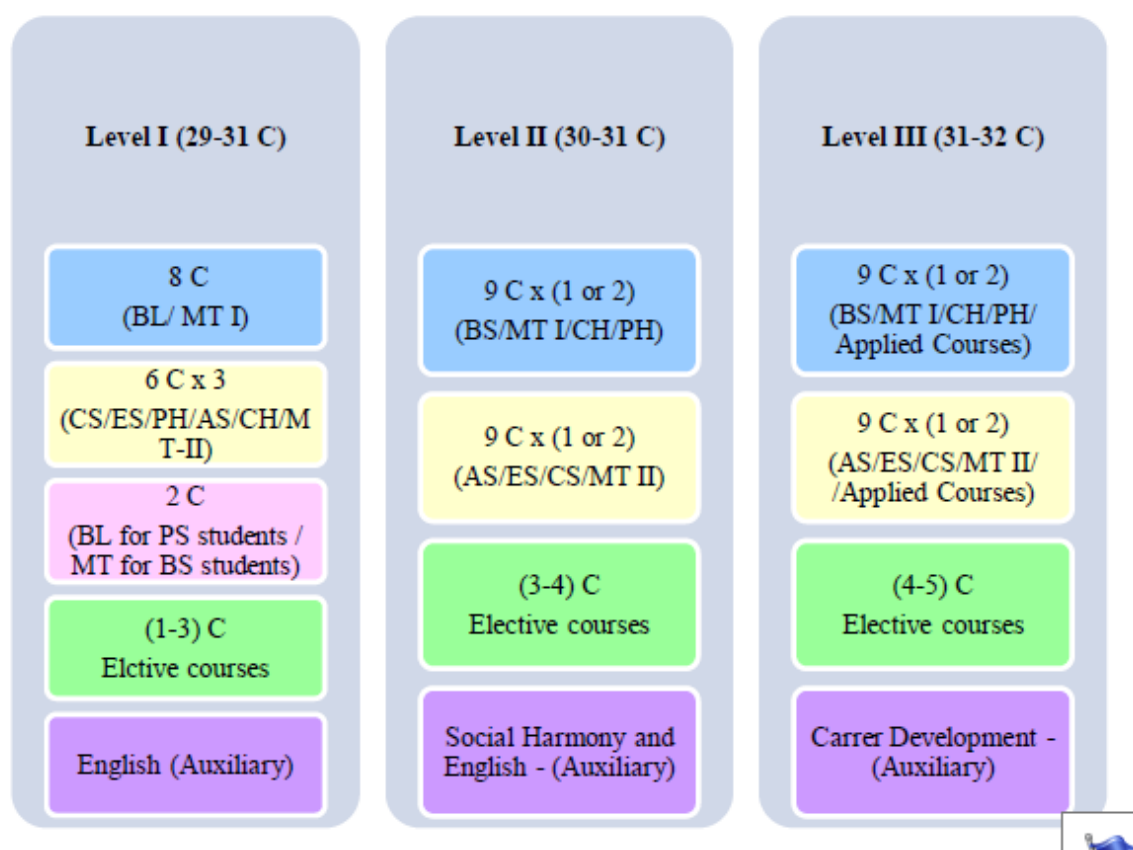


Figure 1.1: Credit distribution in relation to the academic disciplines in levels I, II and III in B.Sc. General degree programme

BL: Biology MT: Mathematics CS: Computer Science ES: Earth Sciences PH: Physical Sciences CH: Chemistry PS: Physical Science BS: Biological Science

Table 1.3: Number of students enrolled in BSc General Degree programme in FAS of the intakes of 2014/15-2019/20 academic years.

Academic year	Biological Sciences	Physical Sciences	GD (Biological Sciences)	GD (Physical Sciences)	GD Total
2014/15	100	109	63	59	122
2015/16	106	102	66	46	112
2016/17	136	106	85	78	163
2017/18	127	104	76	69	145
2018/19	120	103	112	93	205
2019/20	140	136	134	128	262
2020/21	132	113			

Table 1 4: Student performance in BSc General Degree programme in FAS of the academic years 2013/14-2016/17.

Academic year	Graduation year	First class		Second Class		Pass		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2016/17	2020	0	8	20	49	10	21	108
2015/16	2019	0	16	6	28	16	9	75
2014/15	2018	0	2	5	30	20	25	82
2013/14	2017	0	0	1	33	11	35	80

The academic activities of BSc (GD) programme are facilitated by well-maintained infrastructures which include classrooms, teaching and research laboratories. The classrooms are well equipped with a fixed multimedia projector, whiteboards, adequate illumination and ventilation, student chairs, etc. However, the facilities for sport and recreation within the faculty, and accommodation facilities for students as well as for staff need improvements.

Teaching laboratories have necessary equipment to conduct practical lessons for the students and equipment have been acquired through different sources. Necessary instructions to maintain safety have been well displayed and users have been trained as per the need. Computer labs and library facilities are adequate. Computer labs are open for students but with limited hours. In addition, the student community is provided with hostel facilities within the faculty premises (for female students) and at a near proximity for male students. Further, cafeteria, sport facilities, medical centre, and student counselling service are available, and facilities are run with limited resources. In addition, CGU, CGEE, and DELT support the student learning, as well as address the student issues as per the need. Internal Quality Assurance Cell and Industrial Cell are maintained with limited facilities and require attention for improvement.

Subject review had been conducted in 2009/10 and the given recommendations have been reasonably addressed.

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

SER of GD programme of FAS has been well prepared with the collaboration of the all-stake holders. Preparatory work was started in June 2019 and the submission was made in June 2020. During the preparation of SER, many workshops, meetings and discussions have been held in different stages of SER writing. A coordinator for SER writing has been appointed together with sub-coordinators for each criterion. It was observed that SER writing process, together with collection and presentation of documentary evidence has been as a collaborative effort with the leadership of the Dean/FAS and the Director/IQAC.

The SER contains a very brief introduction to the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Faculty of Applied Sciences, and the Study programme. Contribution of each academic department was indicated towards the Bachelor of Science (General degree).

Graduate profile and Programme Learning Outcomes are given, together with the options available for students to continue with their studies. General data of GD programme such as student intake, graduation, ethnic and gender composition of students were given. HR strength of FAS was given and found that an adequate staff with appropriate academic training in diverse disciplines is available to conduct the GD programme.

Documentary evidence have been uploaded to the MIS, QAAC of UGC. The diversity of the evidence is enough for the purpose, but the same evidence has been presented in many places. Review team requested some additional evidence during the site visit and such requests were accommodated by the faculty coordinator without any hesitation, which is appreciated.

A SWOT analysis has been conducted in collaboration with the staff and relevant stakeholders. According to the SWOT analysis, the study programme is served by a well-qualified panel of academic staff but lacks facilities to cater for an increasing student intake. Difficulty in promoting a harmonious cohesion among multilingual and multicultural society is given as a weakness. Low Z score of the students at entry as well as lack of facilities for extracurricular activities are also two noteworthy weaknesses that are mentioned. Limited employment opportunities in the private sector as well as competition with other National and Private Universities are given as threats.

The FAS has undergone Subject Review in 2009/2010 for all main subjects and the corrective actions taken are tabulated with the recommendation given.

Section 3: A Brief Description of the Review Process

The SER of Bachelor of Science (General) Degree Programme at the Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS), South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) was submitted in June 2020. The COVID-19 epidemic and prevailing economic crisis in the country led to postponement of the programme review process by two years. In 2022, the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of UGC rescheduled all programme reviews and provided the necessary training on the review process to be carried out in the MIS platform. A team comprised of three members was appointed by QAC. Review members individually completed the desk evaluation based on SER submitted by the study programme. Upon the completion of desk evaluation, the team met several occasions to discuss the desk evaluations and came to common agreement on marks for each standard. The outcome was entered to MIS of QAC. Subsequently, the documentary evidence was uploaded by FAS in the MIS. The review team examined all the supportive documentary evidence uploaded in the MIS platform as evidence of implementation and internalization of the good practices by the study programme. The accuracy of claims made in the SER were verified based on the documentary evidence provided to reviewers. A few of the evidence was found to be not relevant to the said claims. The team met again through zoom to discuss the outcome. In this process, team members met on 8th and 10th April; 8th, 10th and 17th of May; and 5th of June 2022. After completing the desk evaluation and checking of documentary evidence, review team conducted the stakeholder meetings. The meetings were coordinated by Director of CQA, SEUSL. The review team had meeting/discussions with the following stakeholders through zoom on 18th May 2022 and 6th June 2022: Directors of Strategic Planning & Implementation Monitoring, CGEE, and Science Research Centre/FAS, Coordinator of Industrial Training Cell/FAS, Librarian & Library Staff, Senior Student Counsellor, Student Counsellors, Proctor, Career Guidance Advisor, Wardens of Hostels, DR of Staff & Student Welfare, Head & Staff of Department of English Language Teaching (DELT), Academic Support Staff, Technical Officers, Non-academic Staff, Alumni, and external stakeholders (employers).

The site visit was conducted on 12-13 of September 2022. The site visit by review team consisted of a few stakeholder meetings, observation of teaching-learning process and physical facilities and a debriefing session which were planned in consultation with the Dean of FAS and Director of CQA.

On the first day of the site visit, the programme review team met the Dean of FAS along with the Heads of Departments, SER writing team, and Coordinator of IQAC at the Faculty of Applied Sciences situated in Sammanthurai. The Dean briefed the review team about the establishment and current status of the Faculty and presented a detailed overview of the HR profile, graduate profile and curriculum of the study programme. Then, the programme review team observed the existing physical facilities related to teaching-learning and student welfare in the Faculty of Applied Sciences. Subsequently, the review team had a discussion with the academic staff members, a relatively inclusive group of students and Assistant Registrar of the Faculty who expressed their observations

regarding strengths and weaknesses of the study programme. Further, it was found that the students were satisfied in general with the learning experience though having a few concerns.

On the second day, the review team verified the available common academic support facilities with respect to CQA, SDC, Physical Education Unit and CGU in the Oluvil premises of South Eastern University of Sri Lanka and met the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, and Bursar. A vibrant meeting was held with the senior management, who expressed their willingness to address the needs of students and the faculty to enhance the quality of education.

During the review visit, the teaching-learning practices and facilities described in the SER were verified. It was noted that infrastructure facilities for Lecture Halls, Laboratories, Academic Departments, Branch Library, Science Research Centre, Industrial Training Cell, IQAC, Canteen, Health Centre, Sports Unit, Counselling Unit and Hostels are available within the faculty premises and Examination Unit, DELT, CQA, CGU, SDC, CGEE and Physical Education Unit are found at the Oluvil premises of the University, 14 km away from the FAS. During the visit to the CQA, CGU, SDC, CGEE and Physical Education Unit, the respective Directors provided overviews of the activities of their Centres/Unit. A brief discussion was held with the Head and staff of the DELT and confidential records on examination matters were verified at the Examination Unit. In addition, a lecture session and two practical sessions were also observed at the FAS.

The programme review was concluded with a debriefing session on the second day afternoon, during which the members of review team debriefed the key findings of the programme review which in turn led to a productive and cordial discussion and concluded with lunch.

The review team was satisfied with the cooperation extended for the programme review by the Dean of FAS, Heads of Departments, Coordinator of IQAC and SER preparation team. The staff members were always available for clarification. The logistics of the review team were met very satisfactorily.

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

FAS has established a Faculty Quality Assurance Cell (FQAC) that works with the Centre for Quality Assurance (CQA) of the SEUSL. By-Laws for the CQA contains the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the CQA and FQAC, composition of the committee and the governing structure of the CQA and the responsibilities and duties of FQACs. SEUSL has a comprehensive written document called "Manual of Procedures Part I and Part 11" published in 2020 which gives a detailed description of the University history, its administrative divisions and the functions.

TORs for Standing committees and ad-hoc committees are also written in Manual of Procedures. However, it is not clear how this information is communicated to all stakeholders.

Tracer Study has been carried out periodically in consecutive years over many years. A survey on Employer satisfaction has been carried out in 2018. A Peer Evaluation form has been designed and is available for the University however analysis and action taken is not evident. Student feedback on orientation, ICT facilities, teaching and learning, curriculum revision are available for the Faculty. It is evident that these surveys have been done periodically. Thus, the Faculty appears to be very keen on quality assurance.

Student satisfaction surveys and Graduate satisfaction surveys have been carried out by the FQAC periodically and analysed. However, use of such analysis for continuous improvement of the Study Programme is not evident. It is strongly recommended to use such survey results to improve teaching and learning, support services and other facilities and to identify strengths and weaknesses of the existing systems.

Workshops have been conducted for the revision of curriculum: to map the curriculum with the SLQF and to facilitate constructive alignment of the contents, teaching learning activities and assessments. External consultants have been appointed as resource persons for the workshops. Under the QIG project, academic staff members have made a few industry visits to gather feedback for the curriculum revision. Detailed curriculum proposal is available as a book as well as the curriculum revision process which has been carried out according to standard procedures.

It was observed that internal quality assurance is an ongoing process at the FAS. Minutes of the Faculty Board of FAS record FQAC activities on a regular basis.

Section 5: Judgement on the Eight Criteria of Programme Review

5.1 Criterion 1: Programme Management

The faculty has an organizational structure which is adequate for the effective management and execution of its core functions. Action Plan of the Faculty is UpToDate and aligned with the University SMP. It is commendable that there is an office for Action Plan monitoring.

Distribution of student handbooks (SHB) to all incoming students at the time of enrolment ensures that students are aware about the Study Programme, student support services and all other facilities of the university. It is commendable that faculty has established a FQAC to improve its governance and management. QAC has written a Management Guide /SOPs for core management functions of the University and published in 2020. However, it was not obvious how the content was communicated to the stakeholders. Transparency has been maintained in assigning academic workload for academic members and academic staff is aligned with work norms.

It is commendable that Council approved Guidelines are available for grievance handling, appointing examiners, paper setting, printing, evaluation of answer scripts, releasing results, student attendance, and marking.

Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) has been established and the committee involves in monitoring, reviewing and updating the curriculum in collaboration with CQA, and IQAC of SEUSL.

University is trying to automate some functions related to programme management. However, professional input may be needed to develop a comprehensive MIS which is vital for maintaining a database on student enrolment, examination performance and graduation.

The faculty maintains a well updated website which provides links to all publications such as the handbook, student charter etc. Internalised Student Charter is available at the QAC. The induction programme for new students of the faculty facilitates students' transition from school to university. It also provides information on the university and faculty, facilities and resources available, support services, and the study programmes.

At the meeting with students, they pointed out that being away from the main University in Oluvil is a disadvantage for them, as they have fewer opportunities to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities. Though the first-year students were not happy with the strict rules of the faculty, it is noteworthy that the faculty is taking proactive measures to eradicate student harassment.

Among all good practices, there is room for the improvement of certain aspects of the programme management. Student participation in decision making process have been considered as a good practice. This has been limited to the student participation in FB. It is suggested to facilitate student participation in other sub-committees in the faculty especially the committee that address the student welfare. The use of the MIS for managing student records and examination marks appears to be inadequate and requires improvement. Graduate surveys, employer surveys, student satisfaction surveys, and peer review reports are collected; however, there is no evidence of sufficiently analysing the data or using the feedback for improvement. This aspect requires attention. It appears that collaborations with private organizations is not adequate. MOUs or partnerships and outcomes of collaborations are not visible.

5.2 Criterion 2: Human and Physical Resources

Under this criterion, the staff cadre and adequacy, human resources profile, competency of academic staff, availability of regular CPD programmes for staff, staff appraisal and reward mechanisms, adequacy of teaching and learning facilities, ICT resources for academic activities, library resources, availability of resource centers for laboratory-based training and community-based learning, and mechanisms and facilities for promoting social harmony and ethnic cohesion were reviewed and assessed.

Qualified and competent staff is available in the faculty for development and delivery of courses, and to undertake associated functions such as research, mentoring and outreach activities. The human resources profile is adequate and 42 out of 53 academic cadre positions and 41 out of 47 non-academic cadre positions are filled. It was noticed that among the 42 academics available in the FAS, only 45% (19 nos.) possess doctoral degrees while 31% (13 nos.) are BSc degree holders. Performance appraisal system applied to academics is commendable.

All newly recruited academic staff has undergone the mandatory Induction Programme which proactively encourages them to acquire the required post-recruitment training and competencies to perform their core duties satisfactorily. Appropriate in-service, continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for academics and administrative staff are provided. However, it is not evident whether the impacts of such programmes are monitored, and remedial actions are taken as and when required. Staff and students are motivated to adopt OBE-SCL approach.

FAS possesses appropriate and adequate infrastructure facilities, such as lecture halls, laboratories, library, ICT resources, common amenities *etc.* for administration, teaching, and learning. However, provision of adequate opportunities to all students, except those who offer computer science and statistics, for acquiring ICT skills was not evident. The branch library located at the FAS is heavily used by the students. Study programme ensures that the students are given enough opportunities to

acquire the necessary soft skills by embedding laboratory and field-based trainings and English language training into the curricular activities. Students engage in multicultural programmes to promote social harmony and ethnic and cultural cohesion among students of diverse backgrounds; but faculty level coordinating structures and mechanisms are not evident.

5.3 Criterion 3: Programme Design and Development

The General degree programme at FAS has been developed collaboratively in a participatory manner through a curriculum development committee. The faculty has incorporated external stakeholder participation at key stages of programme planning, design and development as well as formally appointing consultants for curriculum design. Detailed revised curriculum is available, and it is designed to comply with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) and Subject Benchmark Statements. The FAS staff members have been exposed to adequate training in programme development, OBE and SCL. Relevant stakeholder views were incorporated in programme design and Programme level graduate attributes have been identified. Appointment of consultants for curriculum revision from other universities and conducting a brainstorming session with many stakeholders is a good practice. The FQAC closely monitors programme design and development. The team noted few places that require attention. In future programme development, it is suggested to have stakeholder participation in all key stages of curriculum development/reviews. Employers' feedback is an important aspect to consider in programme design and development. The programme should have specific details relating to entry and exit pathways or fallback options. It is also important to consider integrating gender, cultural, and social diversity into the curriculum. The consideration of differently-abled students in programme development is also necessary. It is very important to use survey results effectively for programme improvements.

5.4 Criterion 4: Course / Module Design and Development

Course and module development in the BSc General degree programme of FAS has been conducted according to the available guidelines following standard procedures; hence, many strengths were observed, with evidence, in the process of course and module development. Courses and modules have been designed by a duly appointed internal team for each academic discipline and an external consultant. The process has been financially supported by AHEAD, so a smooth progression has been ensured. ILO of courses/ modules were well matched with PLOs. SLQF guidelines have been followed in assigning credit values for courses together with time allocation for different course activities and allocating notional hours. Each course consists of various student activities, including classroom teaching, discussions, assignments, and laboratory practicals, ensuring adequate student engagement in learning. In some courses, field trips and mini projects have been identified. Course activities ensure the student experience on teamwork, leadership, and interpersonal communications.

SEUSL, along with IQAU of SEUSL, has developed necessary templates, forms, guidelines to use in course and module development. FAS has used such directions in course and module development. A procedure for course and module approval is transparent and clear for the members engaged in such activities. There are opportunities across various forums at different administrative levels to discuss the specifications and content of the courses and modules. This ensures the adequate depth of academic disciplines to match with SLQF levels, completion of programme within the three academic years.

Details of the courses/modules are available for the students and such details have also been uploaded into faculty website. Procedure of course conduct, ILOs, expectations of the course and assessments are clear for the students before the initiation of the courses/modules. Student feedback on delivery of courses/modules as well as course activities is gathered by IQAC of FAS. Each student has the opportunity to take part in student feedback collection.

Among the many commendable activities, a few areas were noted that have room for improvement in future curriculum development efforts. Courses and modules were approved by following conventional procedures; however, it is necessary to have a university policy on approval, and guidelines for the implementation of approval procedure. Student centred learning activities have been identified for each course, which is appreciated, but no clear guideline for introducing SCL activities, as well as assessments of SCL activities. Almost all courses had a similar weightage for summative assessment irrespective of the level of student engagement in SCL activities. Little to no attention has been paid to the needs of differently abled individuals in course and module development, and this should be considered in future curriculum development. Development of an instructional design and development requires careful consideration of many aspects; hence, regular training on instructional design and development for all staff on a regular basis is desirable. The course and teacher evaluation process is well established; however, there is no formal procedure to effectively and efficiently analyse and utilize this data to improve the courses. Therefore, it is recommended that a mechanism be developed at the faculty or department level to enhance courses by incorporating valid and constructive feedback.

5.5 Criterion 5: Teaching and Learning

Students in the BSc (GD) programme have a clear understanding of the programme, courses, and course structure before the start of the programme, as the necessary information is provided to them in advance. Such information is available in FAS website. Teaching and learning (TL) strategies, evaluations, and learning outcomes are well aligned, with a clear relationship between the activities being evident. Each course includes various learning activities, such as classroom discussions, tutorials, assignments, group and individual learning tasks, as well as lab practicals and field trips where appropriate, providing clear evidence of blended learning. Furthermore, these activities encourage collaborative learning. Student engagement in self-directed learning is also evident, with necessary instructions provided through the VLE. TL activities in the programme are gender neutral,

and all students can equally engage in TL activities. TCL and SCL activities are effectively utilized in the programme. At the end of the semester, course and teacher evaluation is conducted by FQAC. Work allocation for the staff is being done in a fair and transparent way at the department level.

Certain areas were identified that require attention for the improving the teaching and learning process. The integration of personal research work or publicly available research data into teaching was not adequately observed. It is less evident that due attention is being paid to the individual needs of students and flexibility in the design phase of independent learning activities; variations among students have not been adequately captured. As per the nature of the programme, there is only little room for encouraging students to conduct creative work/develop new technologies related to the courses/programme; subsequently there is no opportunity for students to publish their own work. There is no evidence of a strong and practical mechanism to monitor TL activities more closely, other than formal course evaluation conducted by FQAC. Further, there is no mechanism to monitor the technology use in TL activities. There is no clear evidence on effective use of course/teacher evaluation data for further improvements of the course or the delivery where appropriate. There is no evidence of recognition or rewards for excellence in teaching.

5.6 Criterion 6: Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression

Learner support services should address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment aimed at student success in higher education. Student support services should be systematically assessed using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input and other appropriate measures to improve the effectiveness of these services.

FAS adopts a reasonably good administrative and academic support system that ensures a conducive learning environment and favourable academic and social interactions between staff and students. Students are clearly informed of their rights, responsibilities and conduct and student discipline is well maintained in the faculty.

While delivering the academic programme, ongoing laboratory-based training is provided to students while maintaining the student-to-staff ratio at the stipulated level. The study programme enhances students' soft skills and socio-emotional skills by offering intensive industrial training as an elective course unit in the curriculum; however, MoUs and agreements related to such training could not be found. Training on learning resources (VLE and e-resources at library) is provided to all users; but performance appraisal is not evident. Though GEE policy is internalized, GEE related aspects are not incorporated in the curriculum. Facilitating student progression through academic mentoring and counselling services is occurring to a certain extent, but it is not adequate. Fallback option for students who do not complete the programme successfully has been introduced recently.

A policy on attending the needs of differently abled students is not found though student requests on such matters are attended on case-by-case basis. Facilities for sports and leisure activities within the FAS premises are minimal and need to be addressed promptly. Although adequate sports and leisure facilities exist on the Oluvil campus of the University, access to these facilities for students at the FAS premises is limited due to the 14 km distance between the two locations. Career education, advice and guidance are provided through the CGU, enabling students to make choices about their future careers. A regular monitoring with respect to student learning experience, achievement, and satisfaction is essential for any study programme. Although student feedback on the teaching-learning process and support services is collected in this study programme, there is no evidence of an effective mechanism for monitoring outcomes and using them for improvement.

The Science Research Centre supports staff research activities by maintaining shared facilities and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration; however, the research environment needs further improvement. A formal networking with alumni is not evident. However, they are helping to arrange industrial trainings and contributing to career guidance activities through WhatsApp group communications.

5.7 Criterion 7: Student Assessment and Awards

Assessment of student learning has a central role in both programme design and in the learning environment of the student. Assessment is used as a tool to promote learning and support the academic development of students. The study programme should ensure that assessment strategies are linked to the ILOs and the assessment practices are fair, valid, reliable, and feasible with provision for regular and prompt feedback on student progress.

The study programme has adopted well-defined assessment strategies and regulations, with periodic reviews and amendments in alignment with SLQF and SBS, ensuring they remain fit for purpose. The alignment of assessment strategies to the respective course ILOs and teaching learning methods is ensured. Examination regulations and student assessment methods are well documented and incorporated in the curriculum development, review and approval policy. However, adjustments are needed in the examination regulations to satisfy the requirements of students with disabilities.

Detailed course specifications and teaching plan manuals are made available to students through VLE. Further, they are provided with appropriate feedback on formative assessments to promote effective learning; but providing the feedback in a timely manner is not evident. Also, releasing the examination results within the stipulated time is of concern.

Graduation requirements are ensured in the degree certification process and the transcript accurately reflects the stages of progression and student attainments. FAS ensures academic integrity and complies with the SLQF in awarding the degree.

5.8 Criterion 8: Innovative and Healthy Practices

FAS has well-established a VLE to facilitate the teaching and learning process, and the necessary training to use the VLE is available to both staff and students. The system is in well operation, and students' access for the VLE is at a good level. The library provides access and guidance to students for using OER, and this process has been adequately facilitated. FAS has embraced the balance between academic training, research and development, and industrial collaboration as key responsibilities of the staff, and the administration effectively facilitates staff engagement in these activities. FAS has recently established IC and Science centre of SEUSL to coordinate and facilitate industrial collaboration between the staff and industry. Research excellence is recognized by FAS by rewarding the members in different modes and giving adequate visibility among the university community. Though the undergraduate research project is not a recognized study component of the programme due to the nature of General Degree (GD) programmes, FAS has attempted to achieve the objectives of a research component by engaging the students in mini-projects or similar laboratory activities. Industrial training is organized as a separate elective course, and students are provided the opportunity to engage in it. FAS and SEUSL have organized many social and cultural events, providing opportunities for students and staff to come together, promoting social harmony and friendship. The academic standard of the GD programme is maintained by timely curriculum revisions and through an established procedure for conducting assessments, with due attention given to paper scrutiny, moderation, second marking, and related processes. Records of grades and the handling of answer scripts are managed effectively, with adequate security and confidentiality maintained. The responsibility for such activities is well assumed by the respective staff members.

In addition to the practices implemented by FAS to maintain the quality of the GD programme, there are certain practices and aspects that require improvement. FAS has made a strong effort to promote and utilize the VLE for teaching; however, some courses do not make sufficient use of the VLE to deliver the programme. Sometimes, the use was limited to a few uploads of class presentations. The IC of FAS has been recently established, and its operations are at an initial stage, evidently not fully operational yet. It is better to be clear on the responsibilities of IC and SC. Physical facilities at IC are not adequate. Formal arrangement with industry was not evident to implement a strong industrial training. The Intensive Industrial training (IIE 32052) is offered as an elective course; hence, not all the students are engaged in industrial training. The linkages with international, national, government, non-government and industry are not at satisfactory level and the few linkages that have been established were not strong and adequately operational. No adequate mechanisms to generate funds to facilitate research. The credit transfer is not evident and operational. Social and cultural events were partially supported by FAS; however, there is no evidence of an established

procedure to provide financial support for such events. There are no formally established pathways for early exit or fallback options, and such procedures are not currently in operation..

Section 6: Grading of Overall Performance of the Programme

Table 6.1: Assessment Criteria and Score

	Criteria	Score	Maximum Score	Weighted Minimum Score	Weightage	Actual Score
1	Programme Management	68	81	75	150	126
2	Human and Physical Resources	26	36	50	100	72
3	Programme Design and Development	51	72	75	150	106
4	Course/Module Design and Development	51	57	75	150	134
5	Teaching and Learning	46	57	75	150	121
6	Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression	53	72	50	100	74
7	Student Assessment and Awards	47	51	75	150	138
8	Innovative and Healthy Practices	26	42	25	50	31
Total on a thousand scale						802
%						80.2
Grade						A

Section 7: Commendations and Recommendations

The review team strongly agrees that FAS is making every effort to conduct the BSc General Degree programme to the best of their ability. This includes comprehensive considerations in programme, module, and course development, adherence to best practices, and the provision of all possible facilities for students and staff. In this process most of the practices have been conducted to the best satisfaction of the stakeholders. Among those, few has been indicated below as commendations.

Curriculum of BSc GD programme has been crafted by following all the approved guidelines in a collaborative manner considering the available resources in FAS, country needs, vision and mission of the FAS and SEUSL. The assistance of expertise has been integrated in programme, module and course development. Upon the development of the programme, all necessary approvals have been obtained. The whole process of curriculum development has been recognized as a commendable task.

The implementation of the academic programme has been given the first priority and required units, centres, and committees have been formed to maintain the best operation of the academic programme.

Student centered learning has been ensured in most of the courses/ modules by incorporating a wide varieties of learning activities. Exposure of students to industry has been recognized. Soft skill development in students has been well considered and appropriate strategies/ practices have been incorporated into the courses. Dedication of academic and support staff to ensure smooth run of all these activities is commendable.

FAS has adopted multiple approaches to provide students with information on the degree programme, student conduct, welfare, bylaws, academic announcements, and more, using new technological and formal tools to ensure student awareness.

The FAS administration has ensured a cordial environment among all staff categories, with administrative decisions made after consultation with relevant stakeholders. Regular meetings are held at various levels of administration. The maintenance of a cordial environment in FAS is commendable.

The review team makes the following recommendations for improving the BSc GD programme of FAS. These recommendations are open for discussion with relevant parties prior to implementation. Recommendations are not in a priority order.

1. IQAC has prepared all necessary templates to collect data on programme management, student feedback, course evaluation, etc.; however, meaningful analysis of the data, discussion of outcomes, and implementation of remedial measures are not taking place adequately. Programme and teacher evaluation is taking place but effective use of such data for further improvement is needed. It is suggested to appropriately address this aspect and develop a mechanism, along with guidelines, to utilize the information for programme improvement. It is suggested to establish a mechanism to monitor the conduct of the programme, similar to a Programme Monitoring Committee.
2. International collaborations and partnerships related to student exchange and research are currently inadequate and require attention and improvement. Additionally, formal collaborations with industries and institutes should be strengthened, potentially through MOUs, to support industrial training, field visits, and similar activities.
3. Student participation in open competitions and similar activities at regional or national levels, beyond inter-university sports competitions, is inadequate. Encouraging students to engage in these activities with the provision of financial support, guidance, and recognition is recommended.
4. Income generation mechanisms within FAS are currently insufficient and require attention. Such income could be used to support social and cultural events, student participation in national and international activities, and student welfare programmes.
5. Staff training, beyond mandatory induction, requires attention. There is a need for training newly recruited administrative and support staff, as well as a policy or guideline addressing this aspect. Additionally, the monitoring of the impact of CPD activities and training is inadequate, necessitating the establishment of a formal mechanism.
6. Sustainable faculty-level coordinating structures and mechanisms need to be established to promote student engagement in multicultural activities related to social harmony, as well as ethnic and cultural cohesion.
7. A mechanism for receiving grievances from all staff: academic, non-academic, including temporary and outsourced staff, needs to be established. Additionally, a guideline or policy for addressing these grievances is required.
8. Implementing some good practices suggested in the PR manual may lead to logistical limitations or require policy changes at higher levels. Such practices, such as catering to differently abled students, credit transfer, and recognition of excellence in teaching, should be discussed appropriately at various levels to reach a solid decision approved by the institute.

9. Faculty IQAC requires substantial improvement of its physical and human resources to carry out regular functions. Industrial cell, sports center, medical center, canteen, staff accommodation require attention as per the availability of fund at SEUSL.
10. The VLE is well maintained, and necessary training is provided to staff and students for its use; however, it is not adequately utilized in some courses and is often limited to uploading a few files. The staff is encouraged to use VLE adequately for teaching.
11. A formal network with alumni needs to be established to assist students in preparing for their professional futures.
12. There are many student service centers and activities, as well as formally established units and centers within FAS. It is important to implement a mechanism to monitor the services provided by these centers and units, allowing for informed decisions to improve the services.
13. Students in FAS face relative disadvantages due to their distance from the main campus. The duplication of resources is also a concern in this resource-limited situation. It may be necessary to discuss this issue and develop tangible solutions, such as providing a shuttle service between FAS and the SEUSL main campus.
14. Quality improvement is an endless process; hence, it is recommended to discuss potential enhancements to the procedures and practices of the faculty in relation to each standard outlined in the PR manual.

Section 8: Summary

South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) was established in 1996 with two faculties, and the Faculty of Applied Sciences was established in Samanthurai in 1997. BSc General degree programme is being offered with the contribution of five academic departments: Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematical Sciences. There are 42 members in academic staff and 63 non-academic members, including the administrative staff, to support the BSc GD programme and other academic programmes of FAS. Of the students entered to FAS, an average 42% students are following the BSc GD programme, graduating an average of 86 students per year. The curriculum of BSc GD programme has been revised considering SLQF, SBS and the trends in the industry. The courses have been designed to inculcate the theoretical knowledge and practical skills. There is a strong emphasis on student-centred learning; each course has practical components and group work, as well as appropriate student presentations. There are ample opportunities for students to develop soft skills and leadership through student activities. The facilities available to students, such as computer labs, classrooms, laboratories, and the library, as well as accommodation, are adequate for creating a conducive learning environment. However, the canteen, sport facilities and the medical center require improvements. The conduct of the programme, and the level of internalization of the good and healthy practices are at commendable levels.

The review team has recommended some strategies for further improvement of the programme, and among those, the following are highlighted. A body for monitoring and evaluation of the conduct of the BSc GD programme is required and should make recommendations to the Faculty Board for further discussion. The data gathered through students' surveys, etc. require meaningful analysis followed by a discussion and recommendations. Improvements for the collaboration with local and international institutes through formal channels is encouraged. Staff, both academic and non-academic, training at a regular basis is required for smooth functioning of the academic programme and other related activities. Well use of VLE is needed to provide the maximum benefits to the students. It is recognised that the quality improvement is a continuous process and room for improvement is always available.

Annexure

Final Schedule for Site Visit

Day 1: 11.09.2022 (Sunday)		
1	Reaching the Hotel (Thoppukandam)	4.00 pm
Day 2: 12.09.2022 (Monday)		
SN	Stakeholder meeting with	Time
1	Departing the Hotel	8.00 am
2	Reaching the FAS	8.30 am
3	Finalizing the site visit schedule	8.30 am - 9.00
4	Meeting with Dean / Presentation by Dean, SER Writers, CQA Director, Heads etc.	9.00-10.00 am
5	Meeting with the Heads of the Depts., SAL (with Tea)	10.00 to 10.30 am
6	Site visit (Faculty premises) Visiting Teaching/Learning Facilities (IQAC unit, Academic Departments, Lecture halls. Laboratories, Library, Industry training Cell)	10.30-12.30 am
7	Lunch	12.30- 1.30 pm
8	Site visit (Faculty premises) Visiting staff - student welfare and other facilities (Canteen, Sports Facility, Counselling facilities, Hostels etc)	1.30 -3.00 pm
9	Meeting with permanent Academic staff (with Tea)-(Excluding Heads/Dean)	3.00-3.30 pm
10	Meeting with students	3.30-4.30 pm
11	Reaching back to Hotel	After 4.30 pm
END OF THE DAY		
Day 3: 13.09.2022 (Tuesday)		
1	Departing the Hotel	8.00 am
2	Reaching the SEUSL, Main University	8.30 am
3	Site Visit (Main University) (CQA unit, Exam unit, Library, CGU, SDC, DELT, CGEE and Sports etc.)	9.00-10.30 am
4	Meeting with Vice Chancellor, Registrar and Bursar (with tea)	10.30 - 11.00 am
5	Returning to FAS	11.00-11.30 am

6	Discussion among three reviewers (need to provide computer, printer and confidential room) at FAS	11.30-12.00 am
7	Wrap up meeting at FAS	12.00-1.30 pm
8	Lunch at FAS	2.00 pm
9	Leaving the Faculty	3.00 pm