



PROGRAM REVIEW 2017

Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Cluster - 1

Programme Review Report

**Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree
programmes
in
Archeology, History and Sinhala
(Cluster 1)**

**Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka**

**Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council
University Grants Commission
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Section 1: Brief introduction to the Programme

The Rajarata University of Sri Lanka was founded in 1995 under Section 21 of the University Act No.16 of 1978 by integrating the Affiliated University Colleges in the Central, North Western and North Central Provinces. At present, the University comprised of five Faculties.

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FSH) was created in 1995 and consists of five departments, such as Archaeology and Heritage Management, Environmental Management, Languages, Social Sciences, and Humanities, and offers BA (General) and BA (Honours) degree programmes, diploma and certificate courses. The mission of the Faculty is to *“train and produce high quality graduates equipped with competence and skills required to meet and respond to diverse demands and needs in the socio-economic development of the national and global environment ensuring excellence of education in social sciences and humanities”*. Currently, the Faculty caters for about 1300 students.

The Cluster 1 includes BA (Honours) degree programmes offered by the Faculty, and the title of the honours degree programmes and the Departments responsible for the respective degree programmes are given below.

Table 1.1. BA (Honours) Degree Programmes included in Cluster 1

Programme Offered	Department	Year of Introduction
BA (Honours) in Archeology & Heritage Management	Archaeology and Heritage Management	2005
BA (Honours) in History	Humanities	2005
BA (Honours) in Sinhala	Languages	2005

Section 2: Review team’s observations on the Self Evaluation Report

The Self Evaluation Report of the Cluster 1 has been prepared according to the guidelines prescribed by the Programme Review Manual (PR Manual). The matters relevant to SER were initiated by the Faculty Board, and the Dean of the Faculty has spearheaded the SER preparation along with the coordinator. It appears that all the staff, particularly younger members have contributed actively in this task. Furthermore, the views of all stakeholders appeared to have been considered in SER preparation. The IQAU has guided the IQAC and the Faculty in the preparation of SER for programme review.

The University has already established internal quality assurance system (IQAS) with establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) at central level and internal quality assurance cells (IQAC) at faculty level. However, it appears that much more work has to be done by IQAS to internalize quality culture within the University and among the Faculties. Nevertheless, the importance of improving quality and standards of academic programmes appears to have been realized and appreciated by the most of the academic staff members.

Based on the SWOT analysis conducted, the SER provided profile of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the study programmes, The report also provided information as regard to the extent of internalizing prescribed best practices. However, the report has failed to provide documentary evidence relating many standards of several criteria.

Section 3: A brief description of the Review Process

Following the completion of the desk evaluation, the programme review team conducted the site visit during the period from 6th to 8th November 2017. As scheduled, the review team had meetings with the Vice Chancellor of the University, Dean of the Faculty and Heads of Departments responsible for the 3 study programmes under review, members of the SER writing team, and students.

Meeting with the Director of IQAU: Meeting with the newly appointed Director of the IQAU was the first meeting to take place at the site visit. The Director mentioned that the Rajarata University has only recently recognized the importance of quality assurance. A series of workshops conducted in this regard have created this positive attitude towards quality enhancement. All Deans and Heads of Departments are keen on improving quality of academic programmes and allied activities. Director pointed out that cultivating habits related to quality, takes time, but he was optimistic that the higher management, academics and non-academic staff will commit themselves to quality enhancement activities in the future. He also highlighted that as the quality assurance activities receiving new importance, the accountability of stakeholders too has gained new significance. Director thought it was an important development, and in order to facilitate this transformation, he has already conducted a series of workshops on quality assurance. The matters of examinations, assessment, second marking and the like have been the themes of those workshops.

Meeting with the Dean of the Faculty: Meeting with the Dean was rather short. But during that meeting, the Dean, too has reiterated the importance of quality assurance. In fact, he admitted that “quality assurance” was a new concept for his Faculty and he was happy that many Faculty members were enthusiastic about enhancing quality. When

asked, the Dean pointed out that the degree programmes need clearly stated exit points and fallback options which are not currently available. He also maintained that two years of general courses and two years of special course (2+2) would be the best for special degrees.

Meeting with the Vice Chancellor: Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor was the third meeting on the first day. He mostly focused on the physical environment and its developments and was happy that 90% students have been provided with accommodation on campus. He also highlighted that the scarcity of drinking water, which has not been fully solved yet, as the university's main problem. He maintained that there are several opportunities for students to develop their co-curricular skills and soft-skills. Undergraduate symposium, has been an important opportunity provided to them in this regard. According to the Vice Chancellor, a recent tracer study has shown that 30-40% of graduates are already employed. He was not sure, however, whether they are employed in the areas of their respective expertise. Commenting of quality assurance matters, he maintained that internal quality assurance system with IQAU and IQACs has been established and this system will intensify the quality enhancement activities in the future.

Meeting with Heads of Departments: Meeting with the Heads of Departments was well-attended. While some Heads were active in the discussion, many others were mostly silent. But nearly all of them mentioned that they need more academic cadres. Reliance on visiting lecturers has led to numerous problems, including the frustration of students. During this discussion, the person in-charge of teaching English as a Second Language (i.e. head/ESL) made some important comments as to how they have adopted innovative teaching and learning methods to motivate students to engage in learning English. However, he maintained that the Faculty does not have required facilities to use some effective methods of teaching, and pointed out, further, that there are only seven cadres in ESL to teach 1100 students. This meeting revealed that curricula revision in some Departments has not been done regularly. Some Heads pointed out that they are in the final stages of curricula revision. It was also pointed out that there is a certain degree of disparity in allocating resources among Departments. Review team too has observed that some Departments are more equipped with resources than others. Perhaps, more active and vocal Heads are better at securing funding. But there should be a sense of fairness in allocating resources to programmes.

Meeting with the SER Writing Team: The SER writing team consisted of enthusiastic young academics and all of them were present at the meeting as well. Chairperson of the SER writing team made a detailed presentation on the SER, which showed that the University and the Faculty have been spending considerable amounts of money on innovative practices. For example, there have been numerous publications, symposia, conferences and the like. Nearly all subjects have some sort of fieldwork component and those field-based work assignment are funded by the Faculty. However, it appears that fieldwork has not been formulated properly. For example, the reviewers did not find any form of

instructions prescribing aims, objectives, intended learning outcomes, work plans, etc., given to students as study guides for field-based educational assignments.

Most study programmes had written graduate profiles. But they can be further improved by incorporating more holistic educational goals. For example, “critical thinking,” was not included in many graduate profiles. Some Departments did not have any form of graduate profile. While it is admirable that the Faculty has journals published in English, and it was, however noticed that all contributors were from Rajarata University. The editors must aspire to make their publications truly national and international. SER team mentioned that they learned so many new things about quality assurance during the writing process and pointed out that each programme would implement many new activities related to quality enhancement in the future.

Meeting with Students: Review team was able to meet some students representing all study programmes in the cluster, despite the ongoing student protest which prevented the review team having a meeting with the student union representatives. Students had numerous grievances beginning with the scarcity of drinking water, which was an obvious problem. Students maintained that drinking water facilities have been set up in the new building complex, but the water from that facility exclusively for the staff and not for students. Students also complained about the lack of canteen facilities and about low quality of food served. They also pointed out that computer labs and internet facilities were not sufficient. Further, they also stated that the library does not have enough copies of key texts recommended as essential readings. According to the students, the syllabi of many courses of some degree programmes are rather outdated. Some of the courses in the History programme were pointed out as some of them.

Students stated that they need to have time and facilities for extra-curricular activities. While students have attempted to use events such as ‘*Sikurada Hendewa*’ (Friday Evening) to create some space for rich cultural life at the University, the strict ‘curfew’ imposed by the administration at hostels makes it difficult for female students to attend those events.

The administrative building where the departments are located is too far away from the classrooms. This is something the reviewers too could see. Distance between the two facilities is too much, and it is hard even lecturers to get there. In addition, this distance is not conducive for closer interactions between teachers and students.

The review team could also observe the fact that the Faculty is somewhat isolated from much of intellectual debates taking place in the country at large. Students maintained that some lecturers who are not as reputed as the scholars in other universities would not allow students to invite outsiders for invited lectures. They also maintained that some visiting lecturers are not the most qualified in the field. However, they stated that there

had been few invited lecture sessions which were found to be very interesting and those sessions expose them to new ideas beyond what they are generally taught at the campus.

We are very impressed by the physical education unit, gymnasium, and other facilities. Cricket coach seemed to be very enthusiastic. But they are located far away from the hostels. The Director of Physical Education also complained that student participation is rather limited. We could also see that some facilities are underused. A regular bus service from hostels through the Faculty to the playground and gymnasium might be a solution to increase students' participation in sports and recreational activities.

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

The Faculty has established its IQAC in accordance with the Internal Quality Assurance Manual (2013) of the UGC and the UGC Circular of 2015, with evidence of appointing key personnel from 2015. The IQAC works in liaison with the University's IQAU. IQAC has a working committee at faculty level.

However, it appears that the IQAC has not been functioning in a systematic way with regular meetings and addressing IQA issues of the Faculty. In addition, the curricula of study programmes are not in alignment with the SLQF guidelines. This feeble functioning of the IQAC is related to the nature of general academic management of the Faculty, and therefore the IQAC needs to be involved in quality enhancement process in more vigorous and continuing manner. It appears that the academics have begun to appreciate the importance of adhering to prescribed best practices in bringing the improvements in quality and standards of academic programmes and allied activities.

The Faculty Board should discuss the IQAC matters as a regular agenda item and the IQAC shall present its progress reports and highlight issues so that the Faculty Board could discuss and agree on appropriate corrective measures. The Faculty indeed possesses sufficient human resources to enhance quality and standards of academic programmes; total of three PhD holders in Archaeology, and two PhD holders each for History and Sinhala together with four academic staff with post-graduate qualifications.

Though there is evidence of conducting training programmes for academics on the concept of quality assurance, internal and external quality assurance mechanisms and procedures, prescribed best practices and standards, etc., there were no signs of internalizing what was preached or learned by the academic members. The Faculty should design by-laws and guidelines on quality enhancement so that each academic member becomes responsible and accountable in fostering quality in their core and allied activities. The degree of diffusion of quality aspects into academic and allied activities

and the progress made by each and every member in this regard should be monitored and assessed. For the initial take off, the Faculty may wish to have an expert on QA as a consultant.

The review team had an impression that the Faculty feels the quality assurance is particularly an important matter for which the Faculty provided appropriate support. Accordingly, the Faculty provided fullest support to the external review process, particularly for the site visit, including provision of logistic support, documentary evidence and facilitating observation of facilities. The Faculty has a great capacity to further improve the quality of its academic and allied activities. However, they need have a policy and by-laws and guidelines on quality enhancement to realize the potential and desired goal. Workshop type training on all aspects of quality assurance procedures, curriculum design and development, teaching and learning and assessment should be provided to all academic staff.

It is recommended to design a teacher's guide covering areas such as programme monitoring, approval and review, assessment of students, use of external assessors; student support and guidance, career guidance, postgraduate research programmes, etc. Also, reviewers are of the view that more proactive measures could be taken by IQAC to improve the programme curricula, and teaching and learning and assessment related practices.

Section 5: Judgment on the eight criteria of Programme Review

5.1 Criterion 1: Program Management

Strengths

The Faculty provides a handbook to all new incoming undergraduates which contains essential information on university environment, academic programmes and facilities and services available for the students. University is also having a well-functioning Ayurveda Unit within the Health Centre premises. Similarly, the Faculty identifies the requirements for the differently-abled students. The Anti-ragging Act and the Policy of Zero-tolerance to Ragging are known to the students.

Weaknesses

The review team observed that the University Health Centre is functioning with minimum facilities. It does not have the services of a permanent medical officer as well as transport

facilities, particularly an ambulance service for emergency care, and sufficient facilities for differently-abled students.

Shortage of water during dry season (July, August, and September) of the year, is a serious recurrent problem that the University has to deal with, and this has affected academic and allied activities to a great extent. It appears that the most first year undergraduates do not enter the mainstream of the university education during the first semester because of the fear of severe ragging.

5.2 Criterion 2: Human and Physical Resources

Strengths

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities has adequate infrastructure facilities for administration; and teaching and learning activities for the degree programmes in Archaeology, History and Sinhala.

All three academic departments serving three BA (Honors) degree programmes have qualified staff; Department of Archaeology has three PhDs while Humanities and Languages has two PhDs each. Lecturers use multiple teaching methods in programme delivery. The review team noted that the three-degree programmes are partially relying on temporary and visiting lecturers.

The review team surveyed the facilities available at the ICT Centre, laboratories, the museum and the library. Review team noted all these facilities are reasonably equip with the required equipment and other resources.

With reference to the undergraduate symposium, it is an opportunity provided for staff and students to present their research. Presentation skill is incorporated into the assessment systems of honours degrees, especially in Archaeology and Sinhala. The Staff Development Centre, offers professional development programmes for staff, while the Career Guidance Unit offers training programmes on 'soft skills' for undergraduates. Further, the university arranges for nearly 90% of residential facilities for students. Canteen facilities within the University have also been made available.

Weakness

Students expressed their inability to present and publish their students research findings because of language difficulties, and therefore, they wish to see that the medium of

instruction is gradually changes into English medium. However, most of the academic publications are edited, and published by the Rajarata University itself. There was very little attention to publish the material in international journals. Some of the English language journals are edited by those who do not write in English or those who are not known to have required language skills.

There is no transport service between Faculty and lecture halls and Health Centre. Thus, it is better to introduce a shuttle service for the students. The visiting lecturers usually come on Friday and conduct lectures during the weekend, and this has created added burden on students. Student feel that their free time is taken way, particularly during weekends and it has affected their involvement in sports and leisure, and extra-curricular activities.

Student are provided with ICT facilities and access to internet. However, the support services available through academic support and technical staff appear to be inadequate. Therefore, the approved cadre vacancies should be filled up and also additional cadre as required should be requested from the UGC. English Teaching Unit appears to provide a satisfactory service. However, the unit requires more staff. The strict 'curfew' imposed at hostels makes difficult for female students to take part in co-curricular activities.

5.3 Criterion 3- Programme Design and Development

Strengths

In connection with the curriculum design, the Faculty recognizes the need for complying with SLQF guidelines and adopting outcome-based education and student-centered learning (OBE-SCL) approach in programme design and development. Some programmes have already begun revising the curricula adopting SLQF guidelines and OBE-SCL approach.

Weaknesses

The records of various stages of curriculum revision were not kept properly and hence difficult to make an impression on the process and its progress. There is no any evidence of stakeholder contribution on curriculum development. Evidently, fieldwork is integrated into nearly all courses. However, the rationale and the percentage of fieldwork are not clear. There is an internship programme, but it is offered only for the students in Archaeology.

5.4 Criterion 4: Course / Module Design and Development

Strengths

The Faculty is aware the value of adopting SLQF guidelines and OBE-SCL approach in course design and development and delivery.

The Faculty takes all efforts to adhere the account academic calendar and timetable to ensure completion of annual academic programmes in timely manner. Some Departments conduct appropriate fieldwork for undergraduates. Also there are assignments related practical studies that are conducted in the field, museum, and audio-visual laboratories. Besides that, there are some co-curricular/extra-curricular activities for students to show their talents.

Weaknesses

The SLQF guidelines and OBE-SCL approach have not been implemented for course design and development yet. University and Faculty are faced with recurrent problem of student disturbances and that has seriously affected the functioning of academic and allied activities. Although, the Faculty has a museum, ICT facility, and audio-visual laboratories, these facilities are not manned by enough technical hands; there is no curator for the museum and the audio-visual laboratories as well as for the IT Centre are not served by sufficient number of technical staff.

Apparently, there no proper evidences as regard to the proceeding of the curriculum development committee meetings. The visiting and temporary lecturers conduct some of the course units. It is evident that some Departments are not conducting students' feedback assessments on regular basis.

5.5 Criterion 5: Teaching and Learning

Strength

The review team observed that the course specification and time schedules are provided prior to the commencement of semester. Courses are delivered through a mixture of diverse delivery methods such as lecture-discussions, collaborative learning, group discussions and presentations, ICT-based resources, and laboratory and field activities.

Undergraduates are provided with opportunities to engage creative work through aesthetic activities (*Wadiya nilla, Wariga mangallaya, Kalambana*). Undergraduates are also provided with opportunities to publish their research work in journals and abstract volumes.

Weaknesses

There is no clear evidence of conducting student feedback assessment and peer observation, by the Departments in regular manner. The academic staff has no proper understanding on the application and the use of Learning Management System (LMS) for programme administration. Departments provide lesson plans to undergraduates only for some courses. The calculation, 80% of class attendances are problematic due to the non-availability of permanent lecturers as the visiting lectures conduct semester-based lecturers within short windows, which are scheduled mostly outside the time table hours. The environment prevailing in most lecture hall is not conducive for evening lectures, as they become too warm during evening hours, and none of the lecture halls are fitted with air conditioners. The University and Faculty do not operate performance monitoring and reward system for teachers.

5.6 Criterion 6: Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression

Strengths

The Faculty offers all incoming students an orientation programme regarding the rules and regulations of the institution, and provide information on academic programmes and learning resources such as library, ICT Centre, museum and support services such as student welfare services, student counselling, career guidance services, etc. The Departments promote active social interaction between the staff and students while the university has already established a Centre for Gender Studies for providing expertise and advice on issues relating to gender equality / equity.

Weaknesses

The review team of the view that there are no satisfactory survey reports on the employability of students. It appears that not all undergraduates are having field training or internships training opportunities. Except of one department, other Departments are not offering such type of training programmes. Most of the Departments do not conduct any self-financing courses. Further, the University and Faculty do not conduct regular assessment on employability of their graduates. Moreover, the university and Faculty do not maintain regular contacts with their alumni.

5.7 Criterion 7: Student Assessment and Awards

Strengths

The Faculty/Departments adopt university approved policies and procedures, and regulations with respect to the examinations; appointment of both internal and external examiners, and adherence to approved examination by-laws ensuring the transparency, fairness and consistency at examinations. Evidently, the Faculty Handbook contains the rules and regulation for student evaluation and awards. Faculty also provides academic transcripts including the respective GPA to students. It is also observable that some assignment marks/grades were given to students.

Weaknesses

The review team noted that the undergraduates did not receive examination results on time. Therefore, the Faculty has to introduce a new mechanism to expedite the processing of examination papers in order to release results in timely manner. The Cluster 1 related Departments are not providing provisional results to students; consequently, some students are affected with this policy.

Observably, the administrative unit office manned by administrative staff has to be re-organized to make it more efficient and effective, particularly to serve students in friendly manner. Further, certain documentary evidences were not available for demonstrating the compliance with some standards.

5.8 Criterion 8: Innovative and Healthy Practices

Strengths

The Faculty and Departments are aware of the value of operating ICT-based platform and its applications (such LMS) to facilitate multi-mode teaching and learning.

Weaknesses

The Departments catering for the honors degree under review are yet to use ICT platform and its applications such as LMS in programme delivery. Except for one-degree programme, the other two-degree programmes have no a systematic mechanism to coordinate undergraduate field research component. Therefore, it is ideal to introduce a system for coordinating, and facilitating student research component and also to promote innovations, creativity and promoting community engagement.

The Faculty needs to initiate a reward system to encourage academics for achieving excellence in teaching, research and outreach activities. Moreover, the Faculty do not conduct income-generating activities. There is no evidence of existence of a credit transfer policy. Moreover, the study programmes do not offer multiple exit and fallback options, particularly for those students who fail to complete the honours degree programmes successfully.

Section 6. Grading of Overall Performance of the Programme

The review team's assessment of the level of accomplishment of quality by the three Honours Degree Programmes offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities is given in Table 6.1. The evaluation was based on the assessment method given in the PR Manual. The review team has assessed three Departments separately and then averaged the criterion-wise scores to obtain cluster-wise assessment. The Table 6.1 shows the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Management has obtained the highest score of 61.3% , followed by the Departments of Sinhala (60%) and History (58.3%). Finally, the grading of overall performance of the cluster is recorded as 60% with 7 out of 8 criteria securing minimum weighted scores. The Criteria 9: Innovative and Healthy Practices has failed to achieve the minimum weighted score.

Table 6.1. Grading of overall performance of the study programmes

No	Criteria	Weighted Minimum score*	Actual criterion-wise score		100%		Actual criterion-wise score		100%	
			Actual criterion-wise score	100%	Actual criterion-wise score	100%	Actual criterion-wise score	100%		
1	Programme Management	75	Archaeology		History		Sinhala		Cluster (average)	
			45	83	45	83	45	83	45	83
2	Human and Physical Resources	50	28	77	28	77	28	77	28	77
3	Programme Design and Development	75	40	83	40	83	40	83	40	83
4	Course/ Module Design and Development	75	32	84.21	30	78.94	31	81.58	31	81.58
5	Teaching and Learning	75	35	92.11	31	78.94	33	86.84	33	86.84
6	Learning Environment, Student	50	42	58	39	54.2	40	55.6	40.33	55.25
	Support and Progression									

7	Student Assessment and Awards	75	37	108.82	37	108.82	37	109.79	37.33	109.79
8	Innovative and Healthy Practices	25	20	23.8	16	19.05	16	19.05	17.33	20.24
	Total on a thousand scale	499	280	613.18	266	582.95	270	594.89	272	596.7
	Grading of overall performance			61.3%, C Satisfactory		58.3%, D Unsatisfactory		60 % C Satisfactory		60% C Satisfactory

Accordingly, three honours degree programmes collectively receives the Grade of ‘C’ which is interpreted as “*minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of a programme; requires improvement in several aspects*”.

Section 7. Commendations and Recommendations

7.1 Commendations

- Recent curriculum revision of honours degree programmes, with assistance received through the IRQUE and QIG funds.
- Incorporation of presentation skill into assessment systems of honours degree programmes, especially in Archeology and Sinhala.
- Students enjoy the field work classes in certain subjects.
- Internships/ field training programmes are available for the students in Archeology.
- University provides an equal opportunity to utilize the health care services, sports facilities and cultural and aesthetic activities.
- Faculty and Departments recognize the necessity of academic training, innovations, and community engagement.
- Faculty offers adequate infrastructure facilities for teaching and learning of Archaeology programme.
- Faculty provides facilitate for differently-abled students.
- Nearly, 95% of the students are provided with accommodation.

7.2 Recommendations

- Faculty has to improve the ICT Centre to provide more effective services to the students.
- Consider revising the curricula of all three degree programmes adopting SLQF guidelines to ensure the conformity with national standards.
- Faculty must take into account the feedback inputs arising from tracer studies covering outgoing students, employers and alumni in revising the curricula of all three study programmes.
- University and Faculty must consider offering multiple exist and fallback options for students, particularly for those who fail to complete the honours degree programmes or for those who prefer to leave the programme with a lower level qualification.
- Conduct student feedback assessments and peer evaluation in regular manner and analyze and use the outcome from those assessment for improvement of teaching and learning.
- University and Faculty should take necessary arrangement to secure required cadre from the UGC and also to fill the existing cadre vacancies in timely and speedy manner to reduce the dependency on visiting academic staff.
- Faculty must take steps to improve the conditions prevailing in lecture theaters so as the create a conducting atmosphere for teaching and learning.
- Faculty must take steps to provide required technical staff for learning resource centers so as to provide adequate technical assistance and services for students.
- University and Faculty must introduce performance appraisal and reward system to reward academics who excel in teaching, research and outreach activities.
- Faculty and Departments must take steps to promote linkages with international partners for promoting collaborative research and staff and student exchange programmes.
- University and Faculty must consider introducing a credit-transfer policy to facilitate students to transfer credits among national/international institutions.

- Faculty and Departments must take steps to improve the accuracy and fairness of examinations by using marking schemes and employing external examiners for moderation and second marking.
- Faculty may consider strengthening English language teaching programme to enable the student to improve their language competencies.
- University and Faculty should strongly consider arranging staff training programme on the application of SLQF guidelines and OBE-SCL concepts, principles and methods in curricula design and development and delivery.

Section 8. Summary

The Programme Review Report contains the findings of the review team concerning the quality of three BA (Honours) degree programmes conducted by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The programme review was conducted according to guidelines prescribed by the Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions.

The site visit component of the programme review was successfully conducted from 6th to 8th November 2017. The schedule of activities during the site visit consisted of stakeholder meetings, observation of facilities, evaluation of documentary evidences, observations of classroom teaching and final wrap up with the higher-level management that consisted with Dean of the Faculty, Heads of the Departments, academics and administrative staff.

The University has already established internal quality assurance system (IQAS) with establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) at central level and internal quality assurance cells (IQAC) at faculty levels. However, it appears that much more work has to be done by IQAS to internalize quality procedures within the University and among the Faculties. Nevertheless, the importance of improving quality and standards of academic programmes appears to have been realized and appreciated by the higher management and academic staff members.

The Student Handbook provides most of the essential information to incoming student. Nonetheless, it could be further improved by incorporating more details of the study programmes and respective curricula. Out of three-degree programmes in the cluster, BA (Honours) in Archaeology degree programme appears as the most of practical oriented programme. Other two-degree programmes, BA (Honours) in History and Sinhala face limitations, particularly due to lacks of required human resources. With regard to programme delivery, a lot of instruction sessions are conducted by temporary and visiting

lecturers. Therefore, it is important to address staff shortage without further delay by seeking required cadre and filling existing cadre vacancies. The review team noted that curricula of three-degree programmes need urgent revisions and therefore, the Faculty is strongly encouraged to take immediate measures to revise the curricula of all three study programmes by adopting SLQF guidelines and OBE-SCL approach and also by taking into consideration of available subject benchmark statements.

The review team has assessed three Departments separately and then averaged the criterion-wise scores to obtain cluster-wise criterion scores. The BA (Honours) in Archaeology has obtained the highest score of 61.3%, followed by the BA (Honours) degree programmes in Sinhala (60%) and History (58.3%). Finally, the grading of overall performance of three-degree programmes is recorded as 60% with 7 out of 8 criteria securing minimum weighted scores. The Criteria 9: Innovative and Healthy Practices has failed to achieve the minimum weighted score. Accordingly, three honours degree programmes collectively receives the Grade of ‘C’ which is interpreted as “*minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of a programme; requires improvement in several aspects*”.

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