

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING



***FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE
UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO***

6th to 8th January 2010

Review Team :

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1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

The subject review evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline as well as the programmes offered by an academic department. It is focussed on the quality of the student learning experience and student achievement. It is designed to evaluate the quality of undergraduates. This subject review report presents the findings of the subject review assessment of the academic standards achieved and the quality of learning opportunities provided in the Department of Accounting (DA), of the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo.

The review team consists of Prof. M.W.Wicramarachchi (University of Sri Jayewardenepura), Dr. W.G.S. Kelum (University of Sri Jayewardenepura), and Dr. (Mrs.) Chitra Ranjanie (University of Kelaniya), and the team visited the Department of Accounting during the period from 6th to 8th January 2010.

The review was conducted adhering to the guidelines provided in the *Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities*, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The review was based on the Self Evaluation Report (SER) submitted by the Department of Accounting and supported by the information provided and gathered during the three-day site visit to the Department of Accounting, University of Colombo.

The following aspects of education/provision were considered under the review assessment:

1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review,
2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods,
3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements,
4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback,
5. Postgraduate Studies,
6. Peer Observation,
7. Skills Development,
8. Academic Guidance and Counselling.

The evaluation of eight aspects was based on:

- Meetings held with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of the Department, members of the academic staff, Technical and non-academic staff, undergraduate students of the Department of Accounting representing 3rd year and 4th year, student counsellors, officers of the career guidance unit of the university, members of the English Language Unit, Graduates and Students of the MBA Programme, and two past out student of the Department.
- Observation of Department of Accounting and facilities of the Faculty (Faculty computer centre, audio visual equipment, lecture rooms, etc.).
- Observing lectures and student presentations.
- Reviewing documents available at the Department.
- Observing University library facilities.

Each of the eight aspects was judged as 'good', 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory' paying attention to the strengths, good practices and weaknesses found in each area. An overall judgment was given as 'confidence', or 'limited confidence' or 'no confidence' after taking into consideration the judgments given to each of the eight aspects.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT

The history of higher education in Sri Lanka is closely linked to the history of the University of Colombo. In 1870 the Ceylon Medical College (from which the present Medical Faculty has developed) was established. In 1921, University College was established for higher education in Arts and Science. The University College, then affiliated to the University of London, was housed in the College House, which is used as the central administrative building of the University today. The University of Colombo became an autonomous institution in 1978. This is a legacy of higher education.

Over the last several decades, the University of Colombo has expanded substantially in terms of academic programs, student enrolment and facilities. It is one of the largest Universities in the country with seven faculties and several affiliated institutes and centres of learning.

Owing to its location in the metropolitan centre, the University of Colombo has the advantage of being at the hub of cultural, economic and socio-political activity in the country. It offers students opportunities for libraries, research centres, professional associations, theatres, art galleries, cinema halls etc. Students can make use of these facilities for their own academic and personal enrichment.

The Vision of the University

“To be a world class institution promoting human development through synergizing knowledge, education, research, and creativity, and entrepreneurship whilst upholding democratic values in a plural society.”

The Mission of the University

“To be the benchmark setting seat of higher learning and scholarship with an uncompromising commitment and dedication to providing society with human capital of high ethical standards, a proven sense of social responsibility, innovative, independent, and analytical in thinking and capable in becoming partners of socio-economic, cultural and environmental development.”

The Faculty of Management and Finance

Established in May 1994, the Faculty of Management & Finance remains as the growing faculty of the University of Colombo. Historical development of this faculty dates back to 1979. The Department of Commerce and Management Studies of the University of Colombo was set up as a department under the Faculty of Arts. The Department of Commerce and Management Studies grew rapidly in 1980s and became the department of the Faculty of Arts which accommodated the highest number of undergraduates. In line with the increasing student population and the rapidly growing needs of Sri Lankan business community, the necessity for establishing a new faculty for this particular field of study began to be felt in late 1980s. The issue was discussed and debated among university authorities, lecturers, students and other stakeholders of the University of Colombo for several years. As an initial step of expediting the process of establishing the new faculty, two academic departments, namely the Department of Commerce and the Department of Management Studies, were formed in 1993 under the purview of the Faculty of Arts. Finally, this long-lived dream of all interested parties materialized in May 1994 with the inauguration of the Faculty of Management and Finance. During the past twelve years undergraduate population of the faculty grew rapidly. In 2008, the total number of undergraduates registered in the Faculty around 1,600.

The Faculty of Management & Finance is committed to pursue excellence in research, teaching, community services and university-industry cooperation and collaboration, whilst making all efforts to be the centre of excellence for management and finance education in Sri Lanka. Living up to this commitment of national and international significance, the Faculty of Management & Finance embarked on planning for a major re-structuring program in late 1990s. The basic thrust of this strategic initiative was to incorporate disciplinary rigor, business practicality and skill development into the curriculum, thus exploring the avenues for forging mutually beneficial and collaborative links between the Faculty and the industry. In its historical evolution, the Faculty of Management & Finance reached yet another juncture in May 2007. Putting the re-structuring plan into practice, two academic departments which were in existence for many years were replaced with six new academic departments namely, i) Department of Accounting; ii) Department of Business Economics; iii) Department of Commerce and Finance; iv) Department of Human Resources Management; v) Department of Management and Organization Studies and vi) Department of Marketing. This intra-faculty development has provided its undergraduates with the opportunity and resources for specializing in different fields of study such as Accounting, Business Economics, Finance, Human Resources Management and Marketing. Alternatively, undergraduates can opt to read for a degree program which draws upon knowledge from all these specializations/disciplines and aims at covering a broader perspective of business administration. To incorporate current trends in the corporate sector, the faculty attempts to introduce a new international business programme under the Business Economics Department. In the meantime the Department of Management and Organization Studies initiates a new degree programme called Management and Organization Studies while upgrading the current course units in 2009.

The Mission of the Faculty

“To be the most prominent and leading faculty in Sri Lanka for high quality academic and executive programs, research and consultancy in management and business studies within a creative and collaborative environment towards developing managerial competencies for betterment of the society.”

Present student composition of the faculty of Management and Finance is given bellow:

Table 1: Students Composition in the Faculty

Academic Year	Year	Male	%	Female	%	Total
2009/2010	1 st Year	183	44%	233	56%	416
2008/2009	2 nd Year	167	41%	239	59%	406
2007/2008	3 rd Year	179	44%	226	56%	405
2006/2007	4 rd Year	175	44%	219	56%	394
2005/2006	Pass out	165	42%	227	58%	392
2004/2005	pass out	191	49%	199	51%	390

Source: Faculty information's

The Department of Accounting

The Department of Accounting was established in May 2007, in the Faculty of Management and Finance, with the purpose of serving the society by providing employable graduates and disseminating new knowledge. The Department offers the Degree of Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting (BBA in Accounting). In addition the Department maintains

relationships with industry and professional accounting bodies in Sri Lanka, in order to absorb opportunities for it's under graduates.

The vision of the department:

“To excel in preparing students who are knowledgeable in the use of conceptual, theoretical and practical applications of financial and non-financial information to reach successful business solutions and while producing students who are of high quality in generating accounting knowledge through research.”

The mission of the department:

“To recognize the Department’s role in the society by assisting students through providing high quality accounting education as they prepare for successful careers in the accounting profession. The Department also strives to advance accounting education and knowledge through research and other scholarly activities.”

The student composition of the BBA in Accounting Programme is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Student Composition of the Department of Accounting

Academic Year	Year	Male	%	Female	%	Total
2007/2008	3 rd Year	36	28%	90	72%	126
2006/2007	4 th Year	33	35%	60	65%	93
2005/2006	Pass out	50	62%	31	38%	81
2004/2005	Pass out	41	58%	30	42%	74

Source: Department SE Report

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1 Aims

The degree programmes aims to develop the managerial capabilities of its graduates who could perform well in the current industrial context.

The aims of the Department of Accounting focus on:

- Providing comprehensive accounting modules which would address both theoretical and practical accept of accounting knowledge.
- Enhancing the relationship between staff members and students in order to ensure a productive learning environment.
- Providing students with internships and other industrial opportunities to be competitive in the dynamic environment.

3.2 Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the degree programmes offered by the Department of Accounting, students will be able to:

- develop competencies such as technical skills, interpersonal skills, analytical skills and other managerial skills.
- disseminate theoretical and practical knowledge which would be beneficial to the society
- maintain conducive learning environment which smoothness the learning process

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

According to the SER, Department has conducted the Degree programme under two types of curricula during the period 2007-2009. The old curriculum, which was started in 2004/2005, is used for the batches 2006/2007, 2007/2008, and 2008/2009. Students of the 2009/2010 batch are following the degree programme under the new curriculum. Under the both curriculums, students need to complete 120 credits, which consist of two levels namely, Level I and Level II. The level one consist of two year common programme and level two consist of two year specialization programme. The Level I lays the foundation for Level II where students select their area of specialization

Under the old curriculum, during the first two years students are required to obtain 60 credits, which consist of 54 credits from core course units and 06 credits from optional course units. .

The curriculum of the Level I program is divided into four course clusters as mention below.

- Basic disciplinary courses – core 18 course units which consist of 34 credits and 1 optional course unit which consist of 1 credit
- Environmental learning courses – 5 core course units consist of 6 credits and 6 course units consist of 7 credits.
- General Skill courses – 4 core course units consist of 7 credits and 4 optional course units consist of two courses with 2 credits and two courses with no credits
- Management and Business Skill courses – 4 core course units consist of 7 credits and 3 optional course units consist of 5 credits.

Level one of the old curriculum of the degree programme consists of 31 core course units with 54 credits, 12 optional course units with 15 credits and two optional course units without credits. The students need to earn minimum of 60 credits from level one including 54 credits from core courses and 6 credits from optional courses.

The old curriculum consists of 30% management (16 credits), 22% accounting and finance (12 credits), 17% economics (9 credits), 11% quantitative techniques (6 credits), 09% IT (5 credits), 02% English (1 credit) and 09% other (5 credits) course units. Management, business environment, accounting and finance, English and skills development course units are included under the optional course units. Two course units, Sinhala and Tamil languages, are offered without credits. Level one of the degree programme consist of 4 semesters which covers two years of the degree programme.

In the level II of the degree programme students are given three options namely Dissertation Option, Independent Project Option and Coursework Option Table 3 given bellow shows summary of credit allocated for each of the options.

Table 3: Summary of credit allocation during the level II

Dissertation Option		Independent Project Option		Coursework Option	
Description	Credits	Description	Credits	Description	Credits
Core Courses	20	Core Courses	20	Core Courses	20
Major Compulsory Courses (Including Seminar)	20	Major Compulsory Courses (Including Seminar)	20	Major Compulsory Courses (Including Seminar)	20
Dissertation	05	Independent Project	02		
Optional Courses (including Research Method 2)	15	Optional Courses	18	Optional Courses	20
Total	60	Total	60	Total	60

The subject areas of the core course units of the level II consist of accounting and finance (4 credits), management (8 credits), IT and quantitative (5 credits), Economics (2 credits) and research methodology (1 credit). Major compulsory course units are from the area of accounting and finance carrying 20 credits. The balance 20 credits are to be earned by using one of the three options given in the table 3.

Reviewers noted that old curriculum of the degree programme consist of too many course units with one credit. According to the opinion of the students this leads to heavy workload, which is unbearable for them within the semester. This weakness has been rectified under the new curriculum introduced by the Faculty from the year 2009.

The new curriculum was introduced during the academic year 2009/2010. Revision of the curriculum was carried out with the consultation of the employers, students and curriculums of the professional institutes. According to the new curriculum students reading for the BBA in Accounting have to earn minimum of 120 credits. The level one of the degree programme consists of four semesters two year common programme. This is compulsory for all BBA students admitted to the Faculty. The common programme consists of 24 core compulsory course units carrying 60 credits. These core course units consist of 30% management, 27% Accounting and Finance, 13% Quantitative Techniques, 10% Economics, 7% English, 3% IT and 10% other related areas.

Selection of students for a particular area of specialization in the Level II of the BBA programme is based on the three criteria: (1) preference of the students, (2) performance of the students and (3) the ceiling of students provided to a programme.

For selection of the BBA in Accounting programme students are required to earn at least 25 credits during the first three semesters of the Level I programme with at least “C” grades for Intermediate Accounting, Advanced Financial Accounting, Microeconomics and Basic Finance. The number of students admitted to the programme depends on the ceiling determined by the Faculty in each academic year based on the demand for the particular stream.

The students of the BBA in accounting special degree programme have to select the coursework or dissertation option at the Level II of the programme. Table 4 given below shows summary of credit allocated for each of the options.

Table 4: Summary of credit allocation during the level II

Dissertation Option		Coursework Option	
Description	Credits	Description	Credits
Core Courses	30	Core Courses	30
Specialization Core Courses	16	Specialization Core Courses	16
Optional Courses	04	Optional Courses	04
Specialization Optional Courses	05	Specialization Optional Courses	10
Dissertation	05		
Total Credits	60	Total Credits	60

The core course units consist of accounting and finance (8 credits), management (7 credits), IT and quantitative (2 credits), Economics (8 credits) and other related (5 credits). The Specialized Core course consists of 16 credit accounting and finance subjects. The specialized optional course units are consisting of accounting and finance (16 credits) and corporate law (2 credits). The optional course units consist of management (8 credits) and economics (4 credits).

Currently second, third and fourth year students follow the degree programme under the old curriculum and first year students follow the new curriculum.

The curriculum is structured to achieve several intended learning outcomes of the degree programme. The programme and course units are at a suitable academic level and sufficient opportunities are available for students to gain required subject knowledge and understanding in Accounting and Finance.

Reviewers observed that the new programme is structured to maintain an inter relationship among different subject areas within a semester. Introduction of industrial training is significant for the development of the accounting skills of the students.

Currently under the level II of the programme, two days per week, lectures are not held. According to the explanation given to us by the academic staff of the department this facility is provided for the students to get industrial exposure in an unofficial manner. This may have lead to poor lecture participations by the students during other three days. The main reason for this poor attendance is due to participation in industrial tanning in all five working days by the students. According to the explanations given by the graduates of the programme it is not possible to find industrial tanning on part time basis. In preparation of the timetables of the level II this factor has to be taken into consideration in the future.

Final year dissertation option has been introduced with 5 credits. This will help the students in developing skills such as problem identification, data collection, data analysis, critical evaluation, writing and communication. Reviewers suggest to reduce the workload during the second semester of the forth year to facilitate the research study and industrial training.

An evenly distributed credit weights among the semesters can be conveniently implemented with a well thought out plan giving more emphasis to the specialization area, which can bring about harmony among all parties concerned along with due emphasis for specialization program.

The review team is of the view that the aspect of Curriculum Design, Content and Review would be judged as ‘SATISFACTORY’.

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

The academic staffs of the Department of Accounting consist of 5 senior lecturers, 4 probationary lecturers, 2 temporary lecturers and 2 visiting lecturers. Four of them are on study leave and one is on maternity leave. As a result of this academic activities of the Department are managed by six lecturers. Law and Computer Based Accounting course units are taught by the visiting staff. Lecturers of the Department of Accounting are responsible for teaching accounting course units and lecturers of other departments of the Faculty are involved in teaching other course units.

The review team had the opportunity of observing a number of teaching sessions conducted by the lecturers for 1st, 3rd and 4th year undergraduates of the accountancy degree programme. Lecturers were well prepared in advance and demonstrated their capabilities in teaching. The course outlines were prepared and distributed among the undergraduates at the beginning of the lecture series and hand-outs were made available to undergraduates. The medium of instruction is English and lecturers are competent in delivering lectures in English language. Student participation in lectures seems to be better in the common programme than in the specialization programme.

None of the lecturers demonstrated student centred teaching but the lecture halls and the equipment provided to deliver lectures confined the lecturer to the podium preventing the lecturer to maintain acceptable level of interaction with the recipients. The lecture halls are with poor ventilation and facilities. The white boards in the lecture rooms are too small and have become discoloured and some of the writings on the board are not visible. There is only one Multimedia projector and it is rarely used. Course manuals were not used.

Lectures are scheduled and conducted on week days, from Monday to Friday between 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. According to opinion of lecturers due to unavailability of sufficient number of halls and relevant facilities including human resources the Department is not in a position to conduct tutorials and small group sessions. Common programme students are allocated with one free-of-lecture day per week for preparation of assignments and 3rd and 4th year students have lecturers only on three days. Even though no credits have been allocated for training under the old syllabus, two free-of-lecture days per week are allowed in the timetable for training purposes. However, reviewers observed that the classroom and computer facilities available in the Faculty are not sufficient to cater for the students. In our opinion, usage of room and computer facilities could be further improved in order to give maximum benefits to students.

The commonly used method of imparting knowledge is delivery of lectures. As indicated by the students and lecturers, interactive environment is not created for teaching and learning. A range of productive interactive methods such as case studies, individual and group presentations, take home assignments, term papers, reports, tutorials, field studies and practical classes could have been used successfully in these sessions.

Nearly 5000 volumes of Management and Accountancy related books are available in the library and the space available for the library is adequate. The library building consists of five floors. Six hundred and fifty seats are available in the reference section of the library. At the time of visit by the review team about 150 seats were occupied by the students. The Librarian is planning to expand the facilities in the library for the readers with the increased number of personnel and space made available to the library. The computer unit in the library, with internet facilities are available in the main library. The readers can have access to about 500

international journals through six databases including Emerald Journal link for which the University makes payments. In addition a few hard copies of few International Journals are available in the library.

University is allocating Rs.1,000,000 for the library for purchases of books and periodicals per annum. Of the allocated amount 50% is for the journals. Faculty is using the self generated MBA funds for the library development.

The students are provided with both computer and internet facilities by the faculty computer centre. However, students are not happy with the available facilities due to the operational problems. Number of computers with internet facilities are very much low according to student computer ratio. Lab belongs to the faculty with 40 computers can be used for lecturers and students assignments typing and internet browsing purposes. Student can use this lab for free time for the purpose of typing their assignments and other purposes only two hours per week.

According to the students views available IT and component of the Degree programme is not sufficient. There also unhappy with prevailing library and lecture hall facilities.

The assessment methods of the Department are adopted common format with the Faculty. Therefore, each course unit of the degree consists of in course assessment and end semester examination. In course assessment can be in the form assignment (individual /group) with or without oral presentation, class room test & mid semester examination. The maximum upper limits of allocation of marks for these two components of assessments are 40%, 60% respectively for the old syllabus and 30%, 70% respectively for the new syllabus. Reviewers observed that the final examinations are only varied between one to four hour long structured questions papers depend on the credit awarded to the subject.

Special calendar is prepared to balance the distribution of assignments throughout a semester. The details given during the discussion with lecturers and students confirm that no over lapping is happening in this distribution. According to the timetables of the current semester, the number of teaching hours per week allocated to a lecturer varies between 12 to 18 hours. This is much lower than the general teaching workload of the lecturers of the other universities.

Internship Training course unit is now been incorporated to the new syllabi introduced by the faculty. The Internship course unit is given only 2 credit weight which is not sufficient for accounting graduate. Reviewers are in the view that the Department need to provide at least six month internship period for the students complete in the competitive job market.

80% class attendance is compulsory in order to sit for the final examination for level I course unit of the degree programme. However attendance is not compulsory for the third and final year students. Marking scheme are available for the final examination papers.

Reviewers observed that the facilities available within the department and the Faculty are not sufficient to have a better teaching and learning environment. Reviewers are of the view that in order to improve the quality of education, all facilities available for the department are needed to be expected.

Considering the above facts, the aspect of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods is judged as 'GOOD'.

4.3 Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

The students admitted to the Faculty of Management and Finance have possessed "Z score" values, between 1.76 – 2.53 in 2007/2008, 1.77 – 2.45 in 2008/2009 and 1.72 – 2.37 in 2009/2010. In comparison to management faculties of some other universities in Sri Lanka these values are relatively high. However, the maximum and minimum values of "Z score" have been decreasing over the years.

The intake of students has increased gradually over the years. Accounting has become the most demanding degree programme of the students admitted to the Faculty. This fact is shown in the table 4:

Table 4: Number of students Admitted to Six Departments

Batch/ Year	Accounting	Marketing	Finance	Management and Organizational Studies	Business Economics	Human Resources Management
2004/2005	74 21.20%	75 21.48%	76 21.77%	42 12.03%	14 4.01%	68 19.48%
2005/2006	81 22.8%	72 20.28%	75 21.12%	41 11.54%	20 5.63%	66 18.59%
2006/2007	93 24.15%	74 19.2%	97 25.19%	40 10.38%	09 2.33%	72 18.7%
2007/2008	126 33.87%	66 17.74%	101 27.15%	13 3.49%	06 1.61%	60 16.19%

The students follow the general courses offered by six Departments during their first two years. From the third year first semester onward, students are supposed to specialize in one stream. At present Faculty provides students with eight field of specialization, namely BBA, BBA in Accounting, BBA in Finance, BBA in Human Resource Management, BBA in Business Economics, BBA in Management and Organization Studies, BBA in International Business. and BBA in Marketing.

As shown in the Table – 4, Accounting has become the most popular Department of the Faculty. According to the opinion of students a considerable number of students could not get admission to the accounting degree programme due to admission limitations.

All students admitted to the Faculty are provided with the Students Handbook, which provides relevant details of eight degree programs and selection procedure for admission to them.

Under the New Curriculum, selection to the Department of Accounting is based on the weighted average marks obtained by students for four course units, namely ACT 1300: Intermediate Accounting, BEC 1301: Microeconomics, ACT 1200: Advanced Financial Accounting and FIN 1300 Basic Finance, which are offered in semester I, II and III; the student preference and ceiling of students allocated to the Department.

Only two batches have been passed out from the Department and students of the second batch are waiting for results. Pass rate of the 2004/2005 batch is 83% and 27% students had classes. Only 2 students had first classes. Ten and eight students had 2nd uppers and 2nd lower classes respectively. Fifty five percent (55%) of students had general passes and the failure rate was 18%. Reasons for the high failure rate have to be examined.

The Faculty computer lab consists of two sections; the first with two rooms is allocated for conducting lecture sessions and the second section is used by the student without guidance. Only two instructors with some computer qualifications are available. Lack of senior personnel and lower level of supervision and guidance have created an unhealthy environment. Computers are being underutilized. This situation has badly affected the skills development of students.

Specially developed indicators to measure progress of students, such as class participation rates are not available presently. Student participation in lecture is recorded but they are hardly used to monitor and guide the students' progress.

Still the Department does not have a system and procedure to evaluate the student employment; however the Department is planning to develop a systematic system for the purpose.

In order to promote student achievements, the Faculty is offering following prizes and medals for the students:

- 1990 MBA Graduate Award for the best overall performance in BBA Degree
- Aitken Spence Gold Medal for Management Accounting
- Sri Lanka Association for Securities and Investment Analysis Gold Medal for Financial Management
- CTC Eagle Gold Medal for the Most Outstanding Performance in Organizational Behaviour

Academic staff believes that their students are successful in securing employment after graduation; however there is no record to prove this factor. We strongly suggest to develop and maintain a database for this purpose. It is better to organize an Alumni Association of the Department.

When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Quality of Students, Student Progress and Achievements could be judged as 'GOOD'.

4.4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback

The Department of Accounting has a system of obtaining formal feed back by means of questionnaires and discussions with the students. The objective is to improve the quality of the Degree Programme. Staff Development Centre of the University of Colombo has developed a Feedback Form and all faculties are using it.

This form covers questions related to presentation, teacher-students interaction at the classroom, the general conduct of the lecturer, the relevancy of contents, the use of teaching and learning techniques and the course improvement suggestions. The formal feedback is taken during 6th week and 13th week of the lecture series. This was evaluated and summarized by the office staff of the Department and handed over to the Head of the Department. Summary feedback analysis is given to the respective lecturer's reference and to the Dean of the Faculty

The feedback through discussions was found to be satisfactory and there is a friendly environment to discuss the students' problems with the staff. Students' comments appearing in Feedback Forms are taken into consideration.

To improve the quality of the program through teaching and learning process the department needs to conduct student /staff regular meetings and special meetings at the request of the Staff or the students.

Another initiative which can be taken into consideration is to form a staff student interactive committee. The objective of this committee is to meet the representative group of students representing each of the batches to discuss academic problems.

Each lecturer can be allocated with a reasonable number of hours to meet students and it has to be incorporated in the academic time table as well. In addition, Lecturers should be available to discuss students' problems.

When the above facts are considered the aspect of the extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative could be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'.

4.5. Postgraduate Studies

Department does not have a post graduate degree programme. However some members of the senior staff contribute to Masters Degree programme conducted by the Faculty and MBS programme conducted by the Graduate Studies of the University of Colombo. Two senior lecturers of the Department serve as supervisors and examiners of the MBA research students . One senior lecturer has served as the coordinator of Postgraduate Diploma of the Faculty and two Advance Diploma Programmes in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Institute of Printing.

Three senior lecturers and one probationary lecturer are reading for the PhD in universities of the UK and Australia and two Probationary Lecturers are studying in masters programmes in the University of Colombo. One probationary lecturer has already completed the MBA programme conducted by the University of Colombo. One of the temporary lecturers is studying in the MBA programme of PIM.

Some academic staff members of the Department have publications in journals and research conference proceedings which will help the Department to develop the research culture.

The Department has five staff rooms for 12 lecturers, and two computers (without internet facilities) allocated for lecturers. Computers of the university main library provide access to many research databases, which could be used by the lecturers and students. However, lecturers cannot access these research databases from their residences.

When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Postgraduate Studies could be judged as 'GOOD'.

4.6 Peer Observation

Academic staff members understand the significance of the peer observation as a powerful tool for improving the quality of teaching and learning process. Lecturers are positive towards peer observation. A Common Feedback Form developed by the Staff Development Centre of University of Colombo is being used by the Department as a compulsory activity.

The Check List for Peer Observation consists of preparation and planning for lectures, class management, teaching and communication techniques, use of resources, monitoring effectiveness, responsibility, teaching strategy, sensitivity, functions, and learning strategies. This procedure was commenced in the year 2009. Documentary evidence of recently conducted evaluations relevant to some members of the Department was available.

On completion of the involved-party discussion, the outcome of the peer observation is communicated to the Head of the Department so that he/ she may arrange a discussion with the lecturer and peers, if necessary. In addition to this arrangement, the useful practices raised at the peer observation are discussed in general at the Departmental meetings with the intension of promoting them among the staff members. This is a good practice.

It is noted that the Head of the Department conducts periodical discussions, especially prior to the commencement of the semester, with academic staff to identify problems in relation to teaching. They also discuss course outlines and assessment schedules for each of the course units, during these meetings.

All final examination question papers are moderated by second examiners and answer scripts are evaluated by two examiners, which are also considered as a good method of peer evaluation. Some lecturers use group teaching methods in their teaching.

When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Peer Observation could be judged as 'GOOD'.

4.7. Skills Development

Courses offered by the Department are structured to provide opportunities for students to develop a variety of skills such as language, technical, analytical, communication and presentation, interpersonal and teamwork. Leadership, communication, problem identifying and solving skills are yet to be introduced. The teaching and learning environment prevailing in the department has to be further improved to develop skills.

The Department adopts a mechanism for continuous evaluation using assignments, group and individual presentations, group discussions, viva-voce and project reports. Students are guided to improve their writing skills.

Computer and IT related courses are minimal in the curriculum structure and the opportunities available for the undergraduates to improve computer related skills are hindered mainly due to lack of a well thought out utilization plan for the computer centre. Lack of experienced staff relevant to IT seems to be the main cause for this situation.

In the old curriculum of the Degree programme industrial training was not available as a course unit. Practical training introduced in the revised curriculum would help the students in developing skills related to business environment. The allocated weight of two credits may not be adequate in relation to the number of hours students have spent in training. The industrial training program has to be properly organized and students have shown some reservations on the method of unofficially conducted the industrial training prevailing at present.

Academic staff of the Department can pay attention to development of management skills of students through a student society.

When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Skill Development could be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'.

4.8 Academic Guidance and Counseling

The Faculty of Management & Finance has a separate Permanent Student Counsellor and six Student Counsellors representing each of the departments including Accounting. However, they were not trained on counselling. Undergraduates can meet the counsellors to get their grievances redressed.

Since students are admitted to the Faculty and not to individual departments in their first year, orientation programme is organized at the Faculty level. The Faculty Handbook is made available to undergraduates at the commencement of the first year of the common program. Staff members of the Department of Accounting assist the Faculty in conducting the orientation programme. An awareness programme is conducted by the Department of Accounting for the students admitted to the accounting specialization programme at the beginning of the year three.

The Department of Accounting practices a “Open Door Policy”, in which students are allowed to meet lectures at any given time, provided that they are available.

As some undergraduates expressed, they follow the common program blindly. Around 20% of undergraduates actively take part in extracurricular activities. Since the university has organized sport facilities, extracurricular activities of the students can be improved through counselling.

Students of the Faculty are advised to refer the published guidelines of American Psychological Association (APA) in writing their assignments and project reports. Moreover, a summary of the guidelines is articulated among the students in the course unit MGT 1107 Functional English.

The responsibility of providing professional counselling to students who require special attention is with the Senior Student Counsellor of the University. Addition to that the Department of Accounting conducts a voluntary counselling service with the assistance of the University Psychiatric Unit of the General Hospital and “Damrivi Centre” (a counselling centre based on Buddhist psychotherapy).

When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Academic Guidance and Counselling could be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'

Based on the observations made during the study visit by the review team, the eight aspects were judged as follows;

Aspect	Judgment
Curriculum Design, Content and Review	Satisfactory
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	Good
Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	Good
Extent and Use of Student Feedback	Satisfactory
Postgraduate Studies	Good
Peer Observation	Good
Skills Development	Satisfactory
Academic Guidance and Counseling	Satisfactory

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Strengths/Good Practices

- Four 04 year degree in Bachelor of Business Administration with specialization of Accounting
- Students are given opportunity to specialise in an area in Business and Management according to their performance.
- The department follow the credit based semester vice teaching method.

Weaknesses:

- Least attention paid to the role of industry involvement in the preparation of the curriculum development
- Industrial training course unit is not given due recognition.
- Classification of course units such as core, specialized core, specialized optional, and optional seems to complicate the understanding of the degree structure.
- Brief outlines of course units are not incorporated in the Student Handbook.

2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Strengths/Good Practices

- The size of the group of the students in specialisation is manageable
- Committed, enthusiastic and well qualified young lecturers in the department
- Students are provided with hand outs and they are in good standards
- Having a well organised and equipped library with a set of personnel with appropriate positive attitudes
- Understanding the significance of having appropriate assessment methods

Weaknesses:

- Not having proper tutorial classes for the students
- Excessive time period has been taken to release the semester examination results to the undergraduates
- Inadequate planning in relation to resource utilization
- Insufficient space and insufficient human resources available for the department/faculty
- Less attendance of students in lectures

3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievement

Strengths /Good Practices

- Students selected to the department are with a higher "Z Score"
- Students pass rate in first attempt is substantial.
- Job security of the graduates is higher compare to other departments.
- Better understanding among the lecturers about the difficulties of undergraduates faced is confronting
- Communication skills in English of the students are fairly good

Weaknesses:

- Attendance of the students to the lectures is insufficient.
- Lack of a data base about the passed out students in the department.
- Lack of internationally accepted students' evaluation method.

4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback

Strengths /Good Practices

- Having a informal feedback system through interaction with students
- Well designed formal system of obtain students' feedback is available

Weaknesses:

- Least concern shown towards this exercise.

5. Postgraduate Studies

Strengths /Good Practices

- Senior academic staff involve in the Post graduate education in the faculty.
- Several research publications of senior members are available
- All most all staff members having postgraduate qualifications

Weaknesses:

- Department has not involved in postgraduate education directly.
- Facilities available for research studies are not adequate for the staff
- No internet and computer facilities available for the staff rooms

6. Peer Observation

Strengths /Good Practices

- Having commonly designed a peer observation system
- There is a close rapport among the academic staff members in the department.
- Having a system of moderating the question papers by a senior academic and marking answer scripts being done by a second examiner at a senior level

Weaknesses:

- Lack of senior level staff such as professors to guide junior staff.

7. Skills Development

Strengths/Good Practices

- Having a committed young staff who are prepared to take challenges
- Industrial training program as a compulsory component of the degree programme.

Weaknesses

- Scarcity of lecturers in English language and IT
- Non supportive environment for establishing subject societies from the students
- IT facilities are not enough for the students
- No special programs to develop students skills

8. Academic Guidance and Counseling

Strengths/Good Practices

- Understanding the requirement for having student counsellors
- Having a set of student counsellors with positive attitudes
- No special training programs for the student counsellors

Weaknesses

- Uncertainty among student counsellors about their role
- Less experience and lack of training to these student counsellors
- Less prominence given to student counselling and guidance

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Classification of course units such as core, specialized core, specialized optional, and optional seems to complicate the understanding of the degree structure. It is advisable to adopt a more simplified method.
2. The course unit of Industrial Training has to be properly designed, organized and evaluated. This process needs development of guidelines. The duration of the Industrial Training needs expansion in order to obtain relevant training for market oriented accounting graduates.
3. Brief outlines of course units are to be incorporated in the Student Handbook.
4. Methods have to be designed to improve participation of students in lectures.

5. Tutorial and practical classes have to be introduced outside of lecture hours to improve knowledge and skills of the students.
6. Currently available infrastructure facilities for teaching and learning have to be improved to improve quality of the students.
7. It is better to increase the number of IT related accounting course units in order to develop student capacities.
8. Computer related accounting packages must be taught with hand on experience in a computer lab environment.
9. Student consultation hours have to be incorporated in the staff time tables, which will present a better picture of the staff performance and student-staff relationship.
10. Develop a database of undergraduates to monitor progress and achievement of students during the four year period.
11. Compile a database of graduates so that the Department could monitor the achievement of accountancy graduates in the job market. This could be achieved by establishing an alumni association.
12. Lecturers are to be provided with more facilities such as space, computers, internet with journal access for teaching and research activities.
13. Skills such as communication, analytical, computer and management demanded by the industry need to be further improved.
14. Establish a subject related student society within the Department to improve management skills of the students.
15. Provide proper training and facilities for student counsellors in order to improve their service.

7. ANNEXURES

Annex 1. List of persons visited

- Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo
- Dean of the Faculty of management & Finance
- Head of the Department of Accounting
- Academic staff of the Department
- Non academic staff of the Department
- Student counsellors
- Undergraduate Students of Year 3, and 4
- Postgraduate Students
- Passed out Graduates
- Librarian
- Two Senior officers of the Career Guidance Unit

Annex 3. List of Lecture Sessions Observed

- 1st Year Intermediate Accounting
- 3rd Year Advance Financial Accounting
- 4th Year Working Capital Management
- 3rd Year Student Presentation

Annex 4. LIST OF FACILITIES OBSERVED

- Department staff member's rooms
- Department Premises
- Faculty Lecture halls
- Faculty IT/Computer lab
- University Library
- Career Guidance Unit

Annex 5. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

- Faculty hand book
- Peer evaluation documents
- Student evaluation forms
- Student attendance list
- Lecturer's time tables
- Lecture Materials/ handouts
- Minutes of the Faculty Board, minutes of the department meetings
- Research publications of lecturers