

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF MASS MEDIA



SRI PALEE CAMPUS

26th to 28th March 2008

Review Team :

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The review team resolved to express its thanks to the Department of Mass Media, Sri Palee Campus, University of Colombo, for the arrangement made to facilitate the review process comfortably and smoothly with the cooperative spirit of the Head of the department, the academic and non academic staff with the support of Acting Rector during the time of its review visits. The review team had facilities and easy access to places for the site observation and to the sources of information's and relevant documents for the review.

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1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

The Government expects every university be mindful of its dedication, devotion and responsibility for the excellent quality service and estimated quantity outputs characterized by relevant capacity and capabilities from the point of perception that tertiary education is public goods very necessary for creating conducive environment for the prevalence of good health, sufficient wealth and opportunity for wellbeing of mankind. In other words universities answerable to the government the public and stakeholders for its contributions towards higher education in Sri Lanka.

Subject Review (SR) evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline of the university. It directed its attention among other things on students learning environment, student progress and achievements, postgraduate studies, peer observation and academic guidance & counseling.

The subject review was first brought in to effect by the Committee of Vice -Chancellors and Directors (CVCD) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) .Now the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) of the UGC has undertaken the task of the subject reviews and institutional reviews in the Sri Lankan Universities. Prof: Colin Peris, Quality Assurance Specialist of QAAC has requested by a letter of 11th March 2008 the following team members to perform the SR of the Department of Mass Media ,Sri Palee Campus,University of Colombo during the days falling from 26 to28 march 2008.

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The main features of the SR process are the preparation of Self Evaluation Report (SER) by the department concerned on the subject they teach where as SR evaluation is to be done by the subject review team on the SER based on the aims and learning outcomes stated therein and the submission of SR Report is the duty of the Team (refer section 1.3 Review judgment and outcomes)

SER of the Department of Mass Media in the university of Colombo, Sri Palee Campus, prepared in 2007 was submitted to the members of the Team with the letter of 11th March 2008 requesting the Team to perform the SR. The SER contained Introduction of the Sri Palee Campus 3pages, Aims, Learning outcome and programmes details in 2 pages, learning outcomes 2 pages, programme details, students, staff three pages and facilities in 1 page, curriculum, design, content and structure of programmes in 3 pages, teaching learning and assessment methods in 2 pages, quality of students, progression and completion, student feedback, quality management 3pages, skill developments, academic counseling and guidance and conclusion in 2 pages. All the course codes and details for 4 year syllabi had added as an appendix

The Team has evaluated the progress made in the quality of education in the Department of Mass Media based on the aims and learning outcomes as indicated in the SER. The objective of the visit was to assess and examine the evidences and information provided by the department.

At 8.30 a.m. on 26th March 2008 the Team was taken around by the head and academic staff to the Department of Mass Media. There the team met with the head of the department and staff members after that the team had a formal discussion with the Head of the faculty of Social sciences in the presence of quality assurance specialist of QAAC.

After the meeting an agenda for the review visit was finalized. In the morning session of the day Head of the Department of Mass Media gave a comprehensive presentation covering all aspects included in the SER and the progress made up-to date. The review process thereafter was conducted by the Team according to the agenda.

The Team held meeting with the following member(s)

(Acting Rector)Head of the Department of Mass Media

Academic staff members of the department

Non-academic staff members of the department

Special degree undergraduate students

Student Counselors/ Academic Advisors

Librarian

Person in charge for Computer Laboratory

The Team visited the following places of the department/faculty/campus for observation.

Rector's Office

The department of Mass Media

Computer Laboratories

Library

The main hall "Arundathee"

Lecture rooms

The Team went through the following Documents and Files

Student's Performance and Activities

Student's Presentation

Faculty works

Question Papers

Skill development Events

Stage Drama

Guest Lecture

Department Video Production

Student's Video Production

Student's Training

Staff Meeting minutes

Student's Symposium-2007

Magazines

Department, Staff and Students

Publications

Department, Staff and Students

Media Education Workshops

Cinema, Radio, Advertising, Print Media Workshops

Proposal for certificate course

Proposal for Orientation Programme for Special 1st Year

Proposal for Editing Studio

Students Researches

Public relation Workshop

The Review Team after having studied and observed all the activities carried out by the department of Mass media has resolved to make the judgments on the consideration of good or satisfactory or unsatisfactory in the respect of each of the eight aspects namely:

(1) Curriculum review, content and review, (2) teaching, learning and assessment methods, (3) quality of students including student progress and achievements, (4) the extent of student's feed back , qualitative and quantitative ,(5) postgraduate studies, (6) peer observation (7) skills development, and (8) academic guidance and counseling.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY, AND THE SRI PALEE CAMPUS, DEPARTMENT OF MASS MEDIA

The history of higher education in Sri Lanka is closely linked to that of the University of Colombo. Formal higher education in Arts and Science began with the establishment of a University college in 1921."College House" which provides accommodation for the central administration of the University of Colombo today, was then the central office of the university college.

Before 68 years students entered to read for degrees of the University of London. The University College thought students' subjects based on the London university syllabi for examinations conducted by the University of London and students sat the BA or BSc degree examination of that university.

In 1870, the Government of that day under the leadership of governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, established the Colombo Medical College which provided a basic course in the subjects, Anatomy and Physiology. In 1880 this college was expanded and permitted to award the Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery (LMS). In the sense, therefore, the university of Colombo could claim, in view of the origins of its faculty of Medicine, to have been associated with higher education for over 100 years. In 1906 under Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, the Ceylon university Association was established. In 1913, set up the University College by the government. In 1942, the University of Ceylon was established at Colombo. The faculty of arts was established in Colombo in 1963. The department of Law was transferred to Colombo from Peradeniya in 1965 and a Colombo section of the university began once again to admit students in Arts, Law Medicine and Science. Under the recommendation of professor Frank Thistlethwaite, Vice-Chancellor, university of east Anglia the university of Ceylon was stepped up to full university status and established as the University of Colombo.

With the passing of the University Act No.1 of 1972, a single University as established with five campuses, one vice-chancellor and five presidents to manage the five campuses. As there were several disadvantages in this system this Act was repealed in 1978. With the passing of the University Act No:16 of 1978, The Government established six independent universities, one of which is university of Colombo.

The Kalutara District where the Sri Palee campus is situated can be considered a semi-developed area, consisting of 762 villages and 14 suburban towns. A 33-acre site with an administrative block, lecture halls, and other buildings were donated to, Colombo University in 1976 by a well-known philanthropist of the area and a famous politician Mr. Wilmot A. Perera. This site had been a breeding ground for the traditional craftsmen, musicians, dancers and dramatists of the area till it was donated to Colombo University. Mr. Perera was influenced by the great Indian philosopher Rabindranath Tagore's caliber. The creation of this great seat of learning in the same style, as the Shanthi Niketan of India was the result of that influence. It is situated about 200 to 300 meters above sea level in Horana approximately 50 kilometers from the capital. The campus is located on a small hillock with picturesque setting, surrounded by paddy fields, rubber estates, and isolated villages.

The campus, which was affiliated to Keleniya University till 1996, had been a center for aesthetic studies in which only aesthetic related course modules were taught. The campus became a part of the University of Colombo in 1996, has a national and international reputation as a provider of high quality education for students who study media and performing arts programmes. Right now there are two departments in operation namely Department of Mass Media and Department of Performing Arts. Incidentally, this is the only campus in Sri Lanka, which confers two four-year special degrees in Mass Media and in Performing Arts under the University of Colombo. The IT Unit and Language Unit were under the Mass Media Department. Over the years, these courses have gained momentum judging by the increase in number of applicants.

Table 01-Students' Composition

		Students' population
Special first year	2006/2007	57
Special second year	2005/2006	35
Special third year	2004/2005	34
Special fourth year	2003/2004	26

3. THE AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1 The Aim

Qualified youths who wish to embark upon a career of mass media have joined this course of studies and it is our earnest aim to ensure the production of fully-fledged media personals from this department. Hence, this tremendous field enthusiasm shown in this discipline. The Aims are:

- Functioning as the main institute in Sri Lanka, establishing a theoretical and practical academia that teaches Mass Media
- Establishing a concept for Mass Media
- Establishing base for Mass Media in Sri Lanka, this, at present, is obscured. Developing social, political, cultural and ethnic harmony through media .

3.2 Learning outcomes

On successful completion of programme , students should have:

Gained a knowledge and conceptual understanding of areas of Mass Media based on programmes that provide initial broad framework followed by progressively increasing depth of study.

Learnt how this knowledge and understanding can be applied to research.

Acquired practical, technical, and intellectual skills necessary

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1 Curriculum Designing, Content and Review

The Degree course units in Mass Media offered by the department of Mass Media are found sufficient and suitable academically and professionally. As its structure and contents are found up to the level necessary for quality of education and opportunity to enhance the skills of the students. This BA special programmes conform to the University's modular units system which embassies that each student must obtain 129 credit points in 43 units by successfully completing the units to be eligible for the award of a special degree. There are 26 main course units and 11 electives and the dissertation for the final year as compulsory. It enables students to gain experience in research skills.

It was revealed during the discussion with the Academics of the Department that the curriculum was designed based on the students' requests and their views as well as that of the stakeholders. The team considered it as a positive approach.

This is the only Campus which offers special degree for all the students with its unique syllabi. It tries to obtain interdisciplinary awareness for the students and their selection criteria also a unique.

The review team recommended the followings as observed:

1. The course unit called MDS 3110-“*Culturology*” be enriched with the components of the impact of the computer, internet, recording industries and most modern subject areas in the world of media literacy.
2. To have the course unit FND 1101 “*Issues in Language and Communication*” more strength the components of listening and creativity be added to it. Some world famous speeches made by eminent orators of Sri Lanka and other countries be added to encourage the students to listen to this selected speeches so as to promote their capacity building and creative power as followed in other countries in the modern world.
3. The course unit MDP 1212 “*Text and Editing*” will be of more useful and beneficial if the areas of printing are brought in to its boundary.
4. The duration of one year for the course unit 1204 “*Elementary Electronics*” be lengthened to all four years with necessary elaboration in the syllabus unit.
5. The areas of media history be included in the unit 2123 Sri Lankan Literature to energize the contents of the course.
6. The areas of recording industries be inserted in to the course unit 2125 “*Radio Programme Formats and Writing for Radio*”.
7. It is recognizable to increase dissertation marks from 3 up to 6 credits marks so as to convince the students that their efforts and skills are given priority.

It is the view of the review team that the curriculum design and content review of the department can be judged as GOOD.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods.

The department has sent 6 staff members abroad for higher studies in order to fill the gap of course learning it has invited 95 visiting lecturers. In this way it follows a system of combination of lectures, practical classes, individual presentation and students' tutorial for the completion of teaching Mass Media which has given many advantages to the students to develop their latent talent and cognitive power.

English is being offered to the students only for two years durations on compulsory basis, but there is a high demand from the students on continuing it fully for four years. The Team agreed with the students' request.

To make teaching very efficient and effective the department follows the system of organizing Seminars, Conferences, Guest lectures, Field trips, Discussions, Surveys,

Research Assignment and media production presentations, Individual and Group works. This mechanism is found very impressive and important.

In order to make available accurate information, the students' handouts and study guides are prepared with the help of lecturers. This involvement is found as an appreciable practice. It has impressed the review team.

To enrich and to make the class room teaching environment attractive with modern techniques lecturers are provided with multimedia projectors, overhead projectors and slide projectors. It is appreciable.

The review team is attracted by the training facilities provided to the students of special degree programmes (Television media, Broadcasting media, Journalism, Mass Communication research, development communication) with the collaboration of the Government sector and private sectors organizations. This arrangement is very much appreciable because it facilitates the students to cultivating their personality and creative power.

The team observed with satisfaction in the practice of question paper setting and answers scripts marking by the internal as well as external examiners.

However the review team also had to observe some obstacle in the form of limited space for office management and for staff consultation with the students and for holding meetings. This situation has induced the review team to highlight these needs for better arrangements.

It is the view of the review team that the present teaching, learning and assessment methods of the department can be judged as SATISFACTORY.

4.3 Quality of Students including Students' Progress and Achievements

The students following special degree course in Mass Media are given opportunities to have training in private and public media sectors for building the capacity of employability and they are guided to be in close touch with the metropolitan area so that they can find jobs while they are in the last stage of university course. The information about this training facilities and students future role in the job markets have made the team understood on the occasion of the site visit where necessary documents were provided to study these facts and figures. The review team members were placed in great pleasure when they were told that some of the students have acquired international and local recognition for their creative works related to Mass Media.

The table below indicates the educational achievements of the students from 1998/1999 academic year to 2002/2003 academic year.

Academic year	1998/1999	1999/2000	2001/2002	2002 /2003
1 st class	-	-	-	1
2 nd class upper	16	4	2	4
2 nd class lower	24	13	13	12
Normal passes	06	03	41	10

It is the view of the review team that the Quality of students including student's progress and achievements of the department can be judged as SATISFACTORY.

4.4 The Extent and Use of Student Feedback

The department did not follow a system of feedback from students other than their own requests. Therefore the big report can be seen between the students and academic staff. It is opinion of the team reviewers that in the future, feedbacks should be formalized to obtain better expected results.

It is the view of the review team that the extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative of the department can be judged as SATISFACTORY.

4.5 Post Graduate Studies

There are no opportunities for postgraduate studies offered by the Department. At the moment there is no attempt being taken to introduce a Master Degree Programme due to shortage of permanent staff and very limited number of qualified senior lecturers. Any how the team requested to start a Post Graduate or Diploma course soon.

It is the view of the review team that the Post Graduate Studies of the department can be judged as UNSATISFACTORY.

4.6 Peer observation

There is a strong understanding among the academic members about the importance of peer observation as a powerful tool for improving the quality of teachers. By the time of the subject review, there was no attempt made to develop a systematic mechanism for peer observation. But some academics have done observation and given the feedback using an evaluation sheet indicating various aspects of teaching and have tried on their own. However, there is no formal common mechanism being practiced. The team requested to the Department to develop a systematic mechanism for peer observation as early as possible.

It is the view of the review Team that the present status of the peer observation adopted by the members of the academic staff of the department is judged as UNSATISFACTORY.

4.7 Skill Developments.

The present curricular structure of the department of mass media is so designed that it would be somewhat sufficient for the students to get benefits and develop their skills in those specific fields. The reviewer were able to appreciate the different aspect of students in producing short films, class room presentation, report writing, continues assignments, writing skills and IT skills. In order to enhance and update the quality and capacity of the undergraduates the Department of Mass Media is periodically conducting the guest programmes , workshop and periodical discussion with the help of resource person and experts from other universities and institutions. This is a good practice for the skills development of the students.

However it would be better if the students are given opportunities to learn English and to acquire proficiency in English and other foreign languages so that they will be able to obtain employment in the local as well as the foreign job markets with bright remunerations for better future prospects.

Also it is observed from the discussion with students that the facilities and opportunities for practical experience and multi skills should be made available to the students so that they may be able to prepare themselves strong enough to compete with specialist coming out from other institutions.

It is the review of the Review Team that the present status of the skill development adopted by the members of the academic staff of the department is judged as SATISFACTORY.

4.8 Academic Counseling and Guidance.

The review team could gather some information about the need for improvement in the academic counseling and guidance system during the time of discussion with Acting Rector, Head and Chief Student Counselor, Academic Staff as well as with the Students.

The new students are given orientation programme addressed by the Rector of the campus, Head of the Department and Students Counselors on various aspects such as, selection of courses, examination criteria and others to enable the students to fit in to the university environment. In this way additional opportunities were provided to students to have facilities for more counseling and guidance program.

Anyhow non-availability of service by professionally trained counselors is one of the notable weaknesses in this regard. There is no satisfactory link between the students and the Carrier Guidance Unit of the campus.

It is the view of the review Team that the academic guidance and counseling adopted by the members of the academic staff of the department can be judged as SATISFACTORY.

5. CONCLUSION

The Review Team's judgment of the eight aspects studied during the review visit is summarized below.

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

The overall judgment is suspended

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The review team would like to insist on the followings in order to improve the quality of education in the Department of Mass Media.

1. Under the curriculum designing and content and review certain recommendation were given to be followed for vitalizing and elaborating the course contents and syllabus.
2. Regarding the limitations and constrains that were observed by the review team the provision of space facilities for the department accommodations and the students involvements in their learning activities and teaching environment should be given priority. Specially student should be given reading rooms.
3. A curriculum development committee has to be formed at the department level to have constant vigilant on the quality of education and to focus on the updating the system.
4. The practical training programs should be organized in collaboration with the public and private sectors to meet the necessary needs of the students for their better future this should be treated as a important part of the syllabus and teaching.
5. In order to ensure the English learning and IT in full capacity the time allocation has to be increased and lengthened to cover four years.
6. The one year M.A course or Diploma course should be started soon to meet the needs of students and the satisfactions of the stakeholders.

7. Peer observation of teaching process should be formalized and should be extended to cover all the staff members of the department including the visiting staff to have overall evaluation system.
8. To ensure the modern trend in higher education system there should be the practice of professionally trained counseling and carrier guidance system.
9. The department should start publishing department journal and students magazine in order to facilitate with opportunities for the students to cultivate their latent talents in writing, thinking, creating and expressing ideas in the publications.
10. There should be a Mass Media laboratory to ease the students difficulties in finding accessibility to various information, materials and handling them for innovative practice.