

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES



***FACULTY OF ARTS AND CULTURE
EASTERN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA***

15th to 17th January 2009

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1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Subject review process evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline. It is focused on the student learning experience and on student achievement. It is designed to evaluate the quality of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. However, the responsibility for quality and standards lies within the institution itself, since it alone has the power to control and to change existing practices.

Review process was conducted according to the guidelines given in the quality assurance handbook for Sri Lankan universities, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The Department of Languages, Faculty of Arts and Culture, in the Eastern University of Sri Lanka, submitted a self evaluation report (SER) consisting of eleven sections, namely: 1) Introduction, 2) Aims, learning outcomes and programme details, 3) Students, staff and facilities, 4) Curriculum design, content and review, 5) Teaching, learning and assessment methods, 6) Quality of students including student progress and achievements, 7) Extent and use of student feedback, 8) Postgraduate studies, 9) Peer observation, 10) Skills development, and 11) Academic guidance and Counselling. The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims and learning outcomes given in the (SER).

The following eight aspects of education were reviewed as per guidelines at the subject level:

1. Curriculum design, content and review.
2. Teaching learning and assessment methods.
3. The quality of students including student progress and achievements.
4. Extent and use of student feedback: qualitative and quantitative.
5. Postgraduate studies.
6. Peer observations.
7. Skills development.
8. Academic guidance and counselling.

The review team visited the Department of Languages and Culture in the EUSL from 15th to 17th of January 2009.

The evaluation of eight aspects was based on:

- Meetings held with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of Department, academic staff, non-academic staff, student counsellors of the Department, undergraduates representing special and general degree programmes, some postgraduate students representing different postgraduate programmes and supportive staff in the Department.
- Observations of university Library, physical facilities of the Department of Languages Class rooms, Lecturers' rooms, etc.
- Observation of teaching of undergraduates and students' presentations;
- and Reviewing available documents at the Department.

Each of the eight aspects was judged as good / satisfactory / unsatisfactory, based on strengths, good practices and weaknesses in each of them.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY AND THE DEPARTMENT

The Batticaloa University College was established on 1st August 1981 to meet a long felt need of establishing a Higher Educational Institution in the Eastern Province, Sri Lanka. This College began with two faculties; Faculty of Science and Faculty of Agriculture. Both these faculties were affiliated to the University of Peradeniya. In 1986, this University College was upgraded to the status of a University under the name of Eastern University of Sri Lanka (EUSL). Accordingly, the EUSL was established on the 1st October 1986 by a University order dated 26th September 1986 issued under section 2 of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978. The Eastern University, Sri Lanka is located in the village of Vantharumoolai, 16 km north of Batticaloa and about the same distance south of Valaichchenai. The University lies on either side of the Batticaloa-Colombo Main Road. The Senate block, the Library, the Senior Common Room and the buildings, which presently house the faculties, lie on the western side of the road. The new Science Block, some buildings belonging to Faculties of Arts and Culture and Commerce and Management, English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU), Students Hostels, Staff Quarters, Sports Centre, Play Ground and a building for Centre for Information and Communication Technology (CICT) lie on the eastern side of the road.

In 1988, two new faculties namely the Faculty of Commerce and Management and the Faculty of Cultural Studies were established. The Faculty of Cultural Studies was then expanded and renamed the Faculty of Arts and Culture in 1991. The Eastern University of Sri Lanka has obtained the approval to establish the Faculty of Health-Care Sciences and the students were admitted to this faculty from 2006 onwards. A Campus of the Eastern University functions at Trincomalee with the Faculties of Applied Sciences and Communication and Business Studies. Swami Vipulananda College of Music and Dance at Kallady, Batticaloa is attached to the Eastern University and renamed the Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies where degree programmes in music and dance are conducted. This institute was brought under the Faculty of Arts and culture recently.

The Faculty of Arts and culture was established in 1986 and at present it contains 6 Departments and 4 disciplines.

The Department of Language and culture was established in 1991 and started teaching Tamil for the Bachelor of Arts (General) Degree. The BA (Special) Degree course in Tamil was commenced in 1993. In 1996, English was introduced by the Department as a subject for the BA (General) Degree.

List of Academic Staff

Name	Designation	Date of Appointment	Qualification
Prof. M Sitralega	Associate Professor	08.09.1993	BA (Hon – UCOL), B.Phil (UCOL), MA (UJ), MA (HAGUE)
Dr. S Yogarajah	Senior Lecturer	01.02.1991	BA (Hon – UCOL), B.Phil (UCOL), MA (UJ), PhD. (UJ), Dip. In Edu. (UJ)
Dr. A Murugathas	Senior Lecturer	02.11.1992	BA (Hon – UJ), MA (UJ), Ph.D. (UJ)

Mrs. RV Francis	Senior Lecturer	15.08.1996	BA (Hon- UJ), MA (UJ), Ph.D. (UJ)
Ms. M Nadira	Senior Lecturer	15.08.1996	BA (Hon – UJ), M.Phil (UJ)
Mr. VJM Kennedy	Lecturer	01.11.1995	BA (India) MA (India)
Mr. J Kennedy	Lecturer	01.04.1997	B.Sc (India), MA (India), M.Phil (India)

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. Aims

- Increase the number of component graduates with adequate skills in language, literature.
- Increase creative skills using language
- Ability to critically read literary texts
- Documentation of regional literature
- Proficiency in Languages other than Tamil and English

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

The department of Languages along with the other Departments in the Faculty of Arts in the Eastern University of Sri Lanka has adapted the semester based course unit system in the curriculum since 2000. This has enabled the student centred teaching/learning process strengthened by continuous assessment which, to a certain extent, removes the examination burden otherwise imposed on students.

The Department of Languages offers two main subjects leading to Bachelor of Arts (General) Degree and one Bachelor of Arts (Special) Degree course for students who wish to pursue studies in the field of Languages.

- a) Tamil as a main subject for the BA (General) Degree
- b) English as a main subject for the BA (General) Degree
- c) Tamil for the BA (Special) Degree

BA (General) Degree course :

All students entering into the first year in arts are required to pursue the BA (General) Degree centred upon three main subjects. Their academic registration for all three years is as follows :

1st year : - 4 credits worth course Units from each main Subject

4 x 3 subjects = 12 Credits

- 18 Credits worth Course Units from Common and Core Modules
- Total number of Credits in year 1 = 30

2nd year - 8 credits worth of Course Units from each main subject

8 x 3 subjects = 24 Credits

- 6 Credits worth Modules from Optional Courses
- Total number of Credits in year 2 = 30

3rd year - 8 credits worth of Course Units from each main subject

8 x 3 subjects = 24 Credits

- 6 Credits worth Modules from Optional Courses

Total number of Credits in year 3 = 30

This brings the total number of Credits required for the BA (General) Degree Course to 90 Credits.

BA (Special) Degree Course :

Eligibility to enter the BA (Special) Degree course at the end of the first year is as follows :

- Should have obtained GPA of 3.1 or above in all course units of the subject of specialization
- Should have obtained C or above in all common courses with a GPA of 2 (with possibility of completing one failed common subject within 3 years)

In order to complete the special degree, students will be required to complete 24 credits worth of units in the subject of specialization & 06 credits worth of units in optional courses in the 2nd and 3rd years respectively. During the 4th year they must complete 27 credits worth of units in their Main Subjects and 3 credits worth of units from optional courses They should also carry out a research project on a given topic.

Thus the total number of Credits required for the BA (Special) Degree is **120**.

Following are the course units proposed by the Department in the disciplines of Tamil and English, for which the approval of the Faculty , Senate and the council has been obtained.

Discipline on Tamil

Bachelor of Arts (General Degree)

Course Code	Course Title	No.of contact hrs.	No.of credit hrs.
1st year			
TL 1101	Introduction to Tamil Literary History	30	02
TL 1201	Tamil Literature and Humanism	30	02
2nd year			
TL 2101	Tamil Grammatical Structure based on the study of Nannul – Nannul	45	03
TL 2102	Creative Writing and Mass Media	30	02
TL 2201	Development of Modern Tamil Poetry	45	03
3rd year			
TL 3101	Sri Lankan Tamil Literary History up to 19 th Century	45	03
TL 3102	Writings of Bharathy in Tamil Literary Tradition	30	02
TL 3201	20 th Century Sri Lankan Tamil Literature	45	03

Bachelor of Arts (Special) Degree

2nd year

TLS 2101	Tamil Novel and Short Story	45	03
TLS 2102	Women Literature in Tamil	45	03
TLS 2103	Tholkappiyam- Elluththathikaram	45	03
TLS 2104	Prescribed Texts- I (20 th Century)	45	03
TLS 2201	Development of Modern Tamil Poetry	45	03

TLS 2202	Introduction to Literary Criticism	45	03
TLS 2203	Tholkappiyam- Collathikaram	45	03
TLS 2204	Folklore of Sri Lankan Tamils	45	03
3rd year			
TLS 3101	Sri Lankan Tamil Literary History up to 19 th Century	45	03
TLS 3102	Theories of Folklore	45	03
TLS 3103	Tholkappiyam- Porulathikaram	45	03
TLS 3104	Prescribed Texts- II (10-19 th Century)	45	03
TLS 3201	20 th Century Sri Lankan Tamil Literature	45	03
TLS 3202	Development of Journalism in Tamil	45	03
TLS 3203	Prescribed Texts- III (up to 19 th Century)	45	03
TLS 3204	Modern Literary & Critical Theory	45	03
Final year			
TLS 4101	Sangam Poetry & Poetics	45	03
TLS 4102	Language: Issues and Prospects	45	03
TLS 4103	South Asian Literature	45	03
TLS 4104	Development of Tamil Research	45	03
TLS 4201	Dissertation		06
TLS 4202	Contemporary Tamil Grammar	45	03
TLS 4203	Languages and Broad Casting	45	03
TLS 4204	Introduction to 20 th Century World Literature	45	03

Discipline of English
Bachelor of Arts (General) Degree

Course Code	Course Title	No.of contact hrs.	No.of credit hrs.
1st year			
ENG 1101	Grammar and Composition	30	02
ENG 1201	Literature in English- Thematic Approach	30	02
2nd year (
ENG 2101	The History of English Language Fiction	45	03
ENG 2102	Fiction	30	02
ENG 2201	Poetry and Drama	45	03
3rd year			
ENG 3101	Literary Theory	45	03
ENG 3201	American Literature	30	02
ENG 3202	Socio Linguistics	45	03

The above contents cover a wide range of subjects in both disciplines and they are well selected. It was also revealed during the discussion with the academic staff of the Department that they are aware of the importance of developing the curriculum by reviewing it regularly. However some of the present students and specially the alumni who were interviewed by the panel are of the view that too many literary components are included in the syllabus and more language components should be introduced.

Having considered the progress made as off present in the curriculum by the Department, towards its development, the panel decided to grade this component as **GOOD**.

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Teaching and learning methodology in the Department consist of lectures, tutorials, assignments, individual presentations, seminars, research and preparation of project reports. The members of the academic staff seem to be well prepared for their lecture sessions. However, the only method of delivery seems to be the lecturing using chalk and board support. The lecturers should be encouraged and facilities should be provided to prepare handouts to be given to students.

The review team observed few lecture sessions being conducted in a spacious auditorium with all facilities including air conditioning. However, the team observed that the lecture rooms normally used are much below the required standards. Except for some student chairs in few classrooms obtained through a social service project, the teaching and learning environment and other facilities are much to be desired. They are not at all conducive for use of any multimedia teaching equipment. Even the access to these lecture rooms seems to be a difficult task during rainy days! In spite of such setbacks, thanks to the commitment and dedication of the academic staff, a good standard of teaching is maintained.

Evaluation system done through continuous assessment, mid-semester tests, presentations and year-end examination is laudable. Credit bases GPA system is being used for grading student achievements. However, it is desirable to adapt the standard GP values as accepted by the UGC to fall in line with common credit currencies used in other national universities.

Tracer study conducted by the Department indicates (SER) that most of the graduates from the Department take up teaching profession and others find jobs as Development Officers, Cultural Officers, Officers in NGOs, etc. This may be the reason why students in all batches during the interview with the review team expressed the necessity to include more language component in the syllabus, introduce translation methods, have Sinhala as an optional course and provide more of IT programmes and facilities.

The review team having considered the above facts and the enthusiasm and the commitment by the members of the academic staff –unfortunately restricted in number- decided to grade this component as **SATISFACTORY**.

4.3 Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

Selection of students to the University is done by the UGC according to the prevailing national higher educational policy. As such the quality of intake of students is somewhat similar to all other universities in the country.

As for English, students are selected depending on their performance at an aptitude test conducted by the Department. In addition, English teachers employed in government schools who have a certain number of years of service and having passed the first year examination as external students with English as a subject, are given lateral entry at the beginning of the second year to pursue the rest of the degree course with English as a subject.

Progress in Students' learning progress is evaluated by means of continuous assessments, mid-semester tests, presentations, tutorials and assignments.

As mentioned earlier, all students in first year have to pursue the BA (General) Degree course in their first year and those who wish can opt for BA (Special) Degree course from second year if they reach eligibility by obtaining a pass in all subjects with a GPA of 3.1 in Tamil, which means the entry to the special Degree course require a very high performance assuring the quality of students at the intake level to that Degree course.

The table below shows the performance in class grading of final year students in the BA (Special) Degree in Tamil:

Year	1 st Class	2 nd Upper	2 nd Lower	Ordinary Pass	Total Students
2003	---	04 (100%)	---	---	04 (100%)
2004	---	02 (66.7%)	01 (33.3%)	---	03 (100%)
2005	01 (16.7%)	05 (83.3%)	---	---	06 (100%)
2006	01 (20%)	03 (60%)	01 (20%)	---	05 (100%)
2007	01 (9.1%)	06 (54.5)	04 (36.4%)	---	11 (100%)

However, the Department recognize the difficulty of attracting good students indicating that (SER) the students are seeking courses other than those in Languages which they believe are more job oriented in the non-government sector. This matter should be addressed by developing the curriculum as mentioned in the earlier segment.

In view of the above, the review team decided to grade this segment as **GOOD**.

4.4 Extent and Use of Student Feedback

Formal feedback from students is carried out at the end of each course through an anonymous questionnaire by the senior academic staff. However, most of the student feedback is done informally by the junior staff through their rapport especially with senior students. Other way of getting student feedback is through the normal interaction with students.

The questionnaire used to get student feedback contains 10 questions of which each question is to be answered by the students opting for one of the four answers given ranging from very poor to very good, concerning aspects of the delivery by the teacher. But there was no evidence of making use of the student feedback in the Departmental activities. This questionnaire must be used by the relevant teacher him/herself for his/her own self evaluation and then may be discussed on certain points at staff meetings.

The rapport between the teachers and the students seems to be very friendly, but the feedback through informal means may not be very objective and fruitful towards enhancement of teaching in the Department.

Use of student feedback in curriculum development and teaching process is important and considered a good practice. Hence, it is strongly recommended to conduct regular and systematic student feedback operations and should be subject to serious consideration by the Department for improvement of its delivery.

In view of the above, the review team decided to grade this segment as **UNSATISFACTORY**.

4.5. Postgraduate Studies

The Department conducts the following postgraduate courses :

- Master of Arts (Taught course) 1 year duration
- Master of Philosophy 2 year duration
- Doctor of Philosophy 3 year duration

The Department is rendering a very important service to the people of the region who require postgraduate qualification for professional and other reasons. The review team observed that 90% of students pursuing Masters one year degree course are teachers in the region. The first batch consists of 27 students and the second batch has 34 students who are currently following the programme.

This is a credit based course conducted in two semesters including a research component carrying 6 credits. The assessment is done in the following manner:

Reports = 15%

Term papers/Assignments = 15%

Oral presentation = 10%

End-semester Examination = 60%

At the discussion with the postgraduate students, three issues were raised by them. First is the delay in commencing the course. It is indicated in the SER that the delays in conducting this programme and issuing of results is due to the prevailing situation in the region. The review team also understood this situation and this problem can be solved in the future with the situation in the region improving gradually. Since most of the students in this programme are teacher in schools, they feel that there should be inclusion of (more) Tamil Grammar in the syllabus. This is an issue that can be considered by the curriculum committee of the Department. Thirdly, the students would like to be provided with library facilities for their reference and research work. This problem prevails in many departments in many universities conducting postgraduate programmes. One way of solving this problem in some universities is by opening a library in the Department for postgraduate students. But the Department of Languages in the EUSL works with insufficient room space for its minimum activities. It may discuss with the main library to solve this problem at least to a certain extent.

The Department has commenced conducting the M.Phil. programme since 1997/98. Students entering this programme should first pass a preliminary examination in Research Methodology and English to get the eligibility to pursue the programme. They will have to sit for four compulsory papers and submit a research dissertation comprising 40,000 to 50,000 words.

The Ph.D is entirely by research and the panel of consultants to supervise the progress in addition to the normal supervisor is a very good practice by the Department.

Due to the few number of cadre positions in the Department, very few qualified lecturers are available to conduct postgraduate courses.

In view of the above, the review panel decided to grade this segment as **GOOD**.

4.6. Peer Observations

There is practically no peer observation being done in the Department. This is considered a good practice in higher teaching/learning and very important practice to improve quality of teaching practice of academics, whether they are junior or senior members. In spite of the fact that there seem to have exchange of opinion done among the teachers in an informal manner regarding their teaching practice, observation and interaction with peers can be done in an informal and friendly manner among colleagues and then make this practice a regular feature in the Department.

However, moderation of question papers and answer scripts by peer staff is a good practice.

In view of the above, the review team decided to grade this segment as **UNSATISFACTORY**.

4.7. Skills Development

The review team observed that there are provisions within the subject matter and outside it meant for undergraduate students to develop certain number of skills in them. Language, Tamil or English being their main subject or one of the main subject, they have the privilege to develop oral and written communication skills enhanced by the practice of presentation they have to perform within the normal evaluation requirements. Students have the possibility of obtaining training in IT by using the central computer centre of the university in spite of the very limited resources available to them. With the very little time available to students due to the prevailing situation in the area and the constraints in travelling, they take part in extracurricular activities such as collective activities in associations and sports.

If the situation turns to be more conducive and facilities provided, the students will definitely improve more in skill development activities.

In view of the above and considering the potentials and enthusiasm of students, the review team decided to grade this segment as **SATISFACTORY**.

4.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling

Regular academic guidance and counselling is an integral part of delivery system in higher learning. If this service is not provided at Faculty level, the Department should appoint an Academic Advisor among the senior lecturers well conversant about academic matters including the modular system and its management. However, it is learnt that advice is sought informally by students to which the academics respond, there is no evidence of structured system to provide that service in the Department. In addition, specially due to the prevailing situation in the region, establishment and development of a psychological counselling is strongly recommended for the benefit of students.

If proper counselling is not available, it must be due to the lack of even basic facilities provided for the academic staff such as their private rooms. Students seem to be satisfied with the readiness and commitment of teachers to give them advice when sought.

In view of the above, the review team decided to grade this segment as **SATISFACTORY**.

Based on the observations made during the study visit to the Department of Languages and Culture at the Eastern University of Sri Lanka by the review team, the eight aspects were judged as follows:

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

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the suggestions, which have been made already, the review team would like to make the following recommendations, in order to improve the quality and the relevance of the degree program implemented by the Department of Languages and Culture of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka.

- Emphasis on improving standard of English of undergraduates
- Emphasis on improving standard of IT by introducing more practical sessions
- Provide and Improve lab facilities for English and IT respectively
- Introduce spoken/written Sinhala Language as an optional module for undergraduates of all levels
- Increase number of cadre positions in the Department for academic and well as academic support staff
- Provide facilities within the department to increase interaction among students and between student and teachers
- Improving infra-structure facilities is very important with necessary adequate classrooms including equipment for teaching purpose (Eg. Multi-media equipment)
- It is recommended to improve the curriculum by including/increasing recommended components in Tamil language as well as in English language.
- Increase the language component and introduce translation methods in the syllabus
- Detailed documentation of the curriculum including intended learning outcomes for each course is strongly recommended.
- The review team is of the opinion that since the semester end examination covers only 60% of the total evaluation, the duration of the written paper should be reduced to two hours (instead of three hours) which is the normal practice in the university system and also which would relief the students from the examination burden to a certain extent.

- It is recommended to have more and regular Departmental meetings for mutual consultation among academics since such interaction is important to develop team work in the Department.
- analyze the student feedback and adopt necessary corrective measures
- It is strongly recommended that a peer observation and evaluation system be introduced and formalized
- Introduce a systematic academic counselling and guidance system for undergraduates
- Organize staff development workshops specially for teaching and evaluation methodologies

The members of the review committee wish to express their gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Head and members of the academic staff of the Department of Languages and Culture, Registrar and the non-academic staff of the Department for their cooperation extended to them during their stay in the Eastern University.