

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



**FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND
MANAGEMENT**

EASTERN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

28th to 30th July 2008

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1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Subject review evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline. This review evaluates the quality of education within the specific disciplines of Enterprise Development, Accounting & Finance and Commerce being offered by the Department of Commerce (DC), Faculty of Commerce and Management (FCM) of the Eastern University (EU), Sri Lanka. The review focused on the Self Evaluation Report (SER) prepared by the Department of Commerce, FCM, EU. Based on the SER, the team evaluated the quality of the B. Com. Specialization in Enterprise Development. B. Com. Specialization in Accounting and Finance and B. Com. (Special) degree programs using the criteria set out by the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the Ministry of Higher Education.

The self-evaluation report consisted of eleven sections, i.e., aims, learning outcomes and program details; students and staff facilities; curriculum design, content and review; teaching, learning and assessment methods; quality of students, taking account of recruitment, admissions, student progress and achievement; extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative; student feedback - qualitative method; postgraduate studies; peer observation; skills development; academic guidance and counselling. The quality of education within the disciplines was evaluated in the light of the aims and learning outcomes given in the SER submitted by the department.

The review focused on the following eight aspects of education:

- Curriculum design, content and review
- Teaching, learning and assessment methods
- Quality of students, including student progress and achievement
- Extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative
- Postgraduate studies
- Peer observation
- Skills development
- Academic guidance and counselling

The evaluation of the above eight aspects of the program were done by obtaining the information from the following sources:

- The self-evaluation report submitted by the Department
- Meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Dean/FCM, Librarian, Head/DC, academic and non-academic staff members of the DC, senior student councillor, students councillors and undergraduate & post-graduate students
- Observation of teaching, student presentations and practical sessions
- Observation of relevant documents (hand books, department publications, study guides, question papers, model answers and marking schemes, marks sheets, dissertations, evaluation sheets, minutes of various meetings, etc.)
- Observation of Department and other facilities (computer centre, lecture rooms, library, etc.)

Each subject review aspect of education was judged by making one of the three standards/levels namely; good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. For the purpose, strengths, good practices and weaknesses in relation to the each aspect were considered. An overall judgment was made from the three options, i.e., confidence, limited confidence and no

confidence by taking into account the status of the judgments given for all the eight aspects of the academic programme.

The dates the review team visited were 28th, 29th and 30th July 2008. The agenda of the subject review is in annexure I.

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

The Batticaloa University College was established on 01st August 1981 to fill a long felt need for the development of a higher educational institution in the Eastern Province, Sri Lanka. The College began with two faculties: the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Agriculture. Both these faculties were affiliated to the University of Peradeniya. On 1st October 1986 this University College was elevated to the status of the National University, and named as the Eastern University, Sri Lanka by a University order dated 26th September 1986 issued under section 2 of the University Act No. 16 of 1978. In 1988 two new faculties, 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 University recently established the Faculty of Health-Care Sciences. A Campus of the University functions at Trincomalee with the Faculties of Applied Sciences and Communication and Business Studies. Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetics Studies at Kallady, Batticaloa is attached to the Eastern University where degree programmes in Music and Dance are conducted. Eastern University, Sri Lanka is one of the fifteen universities in Sri Lanka with student population of about 2500.

The vision of the university is to be a national centre of excellence for higher learning and research with a competitive advantage responsive to the dynamics of the regional and global conditions.

The mission of the university is to pursue excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, to offer through its internal and external faculties, campuses and other facilities an unsurpassed range of opportunities for education and training to all those who will be able to benefit, to enhance public welfare, prosperity and culture by encouraging application of learning and research and to secure and administer resources to achieve these aims effectively.

The Faculty of Commerce and Management has three departments namely Department of Commerce, Department of Management and Department of Economics. The following programmes of study provided by the FCM.

	Programme	Duration
01	B.Com. specialization in Enterprise Development	4 years
02	B.Com. specialization in Accounting and Finance	4 years
03	B.Com	4 years
04	BBA specialization in Marketing Management	4 years
05	BBA specialization in Human Resource Management	4 years
06	BBA	4 years
07	Bachelor of Economics (B.Econ)	4 years

The vision of the Faculty of Commerce and Management is to be the trailblazer in creating excellence in managing the resources to the dynamics of the society through innovative modes.

The mission of the Faculty of Commerce and Management is to be the leader in management education committed to the highest standard of teaching, learning and research to contribute to the holistic development of the society with concern for quality and teamwork.

Bachelor of Commerce (Special) study programme is conducted by the department of Commerce of the Faculty of Commerce and Management; Eastern University, Sri Lanka. Department of Commerce offers B.Com. Specialization in Enterprise Development, B.Com. Specialization in Accounting and Finance, and B.Com (special) degree programmes. The students have passed in the A/L Commerce stream are admitted to the DC according to the general policy adopted by the University Grants Commission.

3. Aims, Learning Outcomes

3.1. Aims

Bachelor of Commerce (Special) study programme is conducted by the DC of the FCM, Eastern University, Sri Lanka has developed comprehensive improvement programmes in various aspects of teaching and learning, academic administration as well as in social harmony. To address the declining number of students, it has been proposed two specialized new study programmes, such as Bachelor of Commerce in Enterprise Development and Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Finance related to the higher demand in global business environment.

Understanding the importance and relevance of Commerce in the Managerial and Business skill based on community in Sri Lanka offers a major intellectual challenge, requires a range of skills with regard to theory and practice, and has relevance within many spheres of human activity in the organization and related technological sector in Sri Lanka and abroad.

In this context, Department aims to provide:

- B.Com degree programme that offers high quality learning experience in an environment of internationally recognized research, in line with University policy, so as to expose students to recent advances in knowledge and techniques, particularly those represented in the research strengths of the Department.
- A range of challenging, learning opportunities within the modular teaching structure of the University, enabling students to develop their academic interests and potential in the field of Commerce.
- Encouragement to students to develop a knowledge base, cognitive abilities and transferable skills that will permit them to contribute effectively to sustainable competitive advantages in the knowledge based competitive environment.
- The effective organization of teaching, learning, assessment, review and quality assurance practices.

3.2. Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of B.Com., Degree programme students should have:

- Gained knowledge and conceptual understanding of areas of commerce, based on Programmes that provide initial broad frameworks followed by progressively increasing depth of study.

- Learnt how this knowledge and understanding can be applied to practice and research on commerce and finance.
- Developed a range of personal and transferable skills (e.g. managing human resource, creating learning organizations, critical ability, independence of thought, data handling and interpretation, computer literacy, information management, oral and written communication, book keeping, costing, financial management, and teamwork) and had experience of applying them to varied situations.
- Learnt theoretical, technical, conceptual and intellectual skills necessary for the acquisition and analysis of data through practical knowledge, and had direct experience of research.
- Developed their ability for critical, self-directed learning.

To help to achieve the outcomes in the above, our B.COM degree programme in the subject of Commerce offers a learning experience that is intended to enable students to:

- Build upon their academic qualifications and potential at entry by progressively developing knowledge, skills and understanding, based on a broad and multidisciplinary approach.
- Study in specialized fields in which they have most interest or talent by offering a choice of studies within a flexible but coherent academic framework, so allowing students to broaden as well as deepen their educational experience.
- Benefit from exposure to selected areas of high level research that exploit the research strengths and resources of the Departments.
- Undertake a final-year dissertation project from wide range offered by active research staff, whether within the Department or made available through interdepartmental collaborations.
- The course units provide learning experiences that are appropriate, accessible, interesting and beneficial to students undertaking other Programmes in cognate disciplines.
- Course contents of Commerce provide suitable learning experiences for students from Commerce field, to obtain a B.Com degree in Commerce.
- The University's teaching and Learning Strategy and the associated Guidelines guide us.
- Overall, Department provides an environment that promotes high quality learning and practical experiences.

Programme Details

The following course/programme of study fall into the remit of the review:

Programme	Duration	Expected Student numbers for 2008
Bachelor of Commerce in Enterprise Development	4 Years	30
Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Finance	4 Years	30
Bachelor of Commerce	4 Years	75

Students admitted to the Faculty of Commerce and Management will be offered general subjects in the first and second years and from the third year onwards, students will be allowed to do specialization in Enterprise Development and Accounting and Finance. However, those who are

not qualified to do specialization in any one of the streams will be allowed to follow special degree programme of Bachelor of Commerce.

The following specialized degree programmes are available for students in the Department.

1. B.Com specialization in Enterprise Development
2. B. Com specialization in Accounting & Finance

Students will be streamlined based on the overall first and second year of academic performances. “Students Guidance Committee”, which consists of the Dean of the Faculty, Heads of the Departments and Senior Lecturers and Senior Assistant Registrar Examinations scrutinize and recommend the students for respective specialization degree programmes. Students should complete their first and second year of Degree Programmes at first attempt without any D grade.

Degree Programme	Required Performance
B.Com specialization in Enterprise Development	At least ‘B’ Grade in DED 2224 Entrepreneurial competencies
B. Com specialization in Accounting & Finance	At least ‘B’ Grade in DAF 2114 Advanced Financial Accounting

Besides student’s performance at the second year of degree programme only a limited number of specialization students may be allowed depending on the availability of staff resources. Minimum of ten students will be admitted to each special degree programmes. However the number of students will be decided by the Students Guidance Committee of the Faculty.

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1 Curriculum Design, Content and Review

The Department of Commerce (DC), EUSL conducts course leading to the B.Com degree for the period of four years. To address the declining number of students, it has been proposed two specialized new study Programmes, such as Bachelor of Commerce in Enterprise Development, Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Finance related to the higher demand in global business environment.

The DC has provided the curriculum of the B.Com. Special Degree, B.Com Specialization in Enterprise Development, and B. Com Specialization in Accounting & Finance in the Self Evaluation Report (SER). The present curriculum was introduced during the academic year 2005/2006.

The Degree programs under the review consist of 120 credits and the duration is four years. The four-year period is divided into 8 semesters and the students are required to follow the 2-year common programme and 2-year specialization programme conducted by the DC.

During the first two years, students are required to follow 21 compulsory course units, which give 60 credits. Third year B.Com Special Degree students are required to follow 9 compulsory course units, which gives 30 credits, B.Com. Specialization in Enterprise Development students and B. Com Specialization in Accounting & Finance students are required to follow 9 compulsory course units, and one optional course unit which gives 30 credits. The final year B.Com Special students are required to follow 8 compulsory course units including 1 course units for Independent Research Study and 2 optional course units, gives 30 credits, B.Com. Specialization in Enterprise Development students and B. Com Specialization in Accounting & Finance students are required

to follow 8 compulsory course units, and 2 optional course units including 1 course unit for Internship and 1 course unit for Independent Research Study, which gives 30 credits.

The contents of the curriculum are structured to achieve intended learning outcomes of the degree programs. The programs and course units are at a suitable academic level and sufficient opportunities are available for students to gain required subject knowledge in the specializing fields.

Reviewers noted that though the Department of Commerce offering three specialization areas for the student's only two specializations are in operations. This is due to the rigid selections criteria's used by the department to select the students. Most popular specialization program available in the department was accounting and Finance not offering to the students for last two years. It is important to select the students to the specializations based on their preferences.

Reviewers also noted that the approved lists of electives are available in the degree program not offering to the students for selections. Though the optional subjects are their department only offering one subject for all students at one time made optional like compulsory subject for all B.Com students.

The degree programme is conducted in English medium. However, the English course offered to students is not adequate to develop the English language skills of the students.

The Reviewers observed that the programme is structured to maintain an inter relationships among different subjects within the semester but DC is changing the subjects according to convenience of the availability of visiting staff. This is not a good practice. Even though the introduction of practical training component within the curriculum is recognized as a very important component for the students for their employability after graduation, this issue has not been addressed in a formal way to support students. However, some of the specialization students are facilitated to undergo industrial training in the third year second semester.

The final year research dissertation has been introduced as a compulsory subject for all the students whatever the field they have chosen. This is helpful in developing skills in problem identification, data collection and analysis, critical evaluation and communication. No of credit offering for the independent research study was only three. Reviewers are of the view that it is important to increase the credit value of this course at least up to six credits. Reviewers suggest to reduce the workload during the second semester of the forth year to facilitate the research study by means of shifting one or two subjects to the first semester.

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 DC consists of 6 internal and 4 visiting staff members. The internal staff consists of 4 senior lecturers, 2 probationary lecturers. The whole degree programme is conducted by the internal members of the all departments, where necessary services of the visiting lecturers are also obtained, for the subjects such as legal and political environment, taxation and auditing. All the lectures are conducted during the weekdays.

Currently the department owns several lecture rooms with adequate teaching and learning facilities. It should be stated that the physical environment in these class rooms are satisfactory. According to the SER, this Degree programme is a broad multi disciplinary approach which provides the students with comprehensive knowledge in the areas of Commerce and Management. As mentioned in the SER, there is no evidence of providing study guides or manuals for the students. But, there are sufficient evidences of distributing hand outs to the students during study sessions.

The tutorials classes are not conducted separately. As explained by the staff during the meeting tutorials are normally incorporated within the lecture. Student expresses the view that practical parts of the subject matters are inadequate due to the unavailability of separate tutorials. Reviewers also in the view that tutorials are essential for practical subjects like accounting, computers and financial management.

The Faculty Board is informed about teaching, learning and assessment mechanisms when matters arise. Further, all new course units and programs are submitted for the approval of the Faculty Board, and the senate.

Formal lectures, practical classes, and small group assignments are used in the learning process. However, the number of practical classes organized by the staff, at present is not satisfactory from the student's point of views. Students demand for more practical classes to develop computer skills. It is important to introduce more computerized accounting and finance courses to the students. The reviewer's suggestion is to assess the computer skills of the students by conducting practical examination at the end of the semester. More opportunities should be given the students for developing Language skills and interpersonal skills. On the other hand, the number of field and industrial visits is insufficient. Reviewers noted that these aspects should be improved further

The review team observed that, at the beginning of each semester the lecturer provides the course outline for each course unit for the students indicating learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessments methods, list of readings, names of the topics and session breakdowns which could be identified as good practices.

The lectures are conducted in English medium. Four Business Communication course units are offered to the students during first four semesters. Feedback from the students revealed that this is not sufficient to improve their knowledge of English and requires an additional course of English. The opinion of the review team is to conduct an intensive English programme during the orientation period at least for a period of two weeks.

When observing the lecture sessions, reviewers noted that lecture content is supported with handouts. Further, the use of multimedia and other teaching aids was also evident. Students' participations of the lectures are in a satisfactory level. The lecture is delivered in the English medium. All these were found to be good practices.

Even though, the aims of the programme is to produce graduates with leadership, IT, communication and other transferable skills, the present system poorly addresses these areas and needs continual improvements throughout the programme.

The present evaluation system includes, end semester examination (65%) and continues assessments (35%). Continues assessment consists of several means such as tutorials, class

room tests, presentations, case studies, etc. These requirements are informed to the students at the beginning of the lecture series by the respective lecturer and seemed explicit.

As per with the Aims and Learning objectives of the program, the number of hours given to acquire required skills through the continuous assignments seemed be sufficient. Due time allocation and appropriate combinations of assessments with the emphasis of skills development are also needed.

To reduce the student workload, at the end of the semester, It is proposed that the staff should be advised by HOD to set continuous assessments throughout the semester with reasonable gaps. The meeting with the students revealed that more often these assignments are given at the same time; towards the end of the semester. In this regard, reviewers suggest that there should be better coordination among the staff.

The moderation of the examination papers is done by senior staff within the Faculty and answer scripts are evaluated by two examiners. When necessary, services of the outside examiners are also obtained from other universities and institutions. There were sufficient evidences to support that paper marking is methodical. Reviewers observed the released of the final examinations marks takes more than four five months. This made lots of problems to the students, who intended to select their specializations during the third year. It is important to release the results before starting the new semester.

The main library of the university provides over 100,000 books, journals and other materials. The collection of texts for referencing found to be adequate. Library is opened all seven days of the week gives more opportunities to the student to used available library facilities. Reviewers also observed that enough reading capacity is available in the library.

The academic staff is mostly involved in teaching in the department program and other departments program within the faculty and also other faculties. This may be the reasons for not incorporating separate tutorials for the B.Com students.

All students have access to network computers and print facilities through weekdays. There are around 60 computers are available for this purpose. All new students are given university e-mail addresses by the department to use for e communication purposes.

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 Achievement

Students are enrolled by UGC according to their admission procedures. They are given hand book (Students' Guide). All the details about faculty, departments, library and other facilities are given in that hand book. Orientation programme is arranged by the faculty for the fresh students.

Students' Progress in each year is monitored by tutorials, mid semester examinations, open book assessment, term papers, presentations, special assignments and end semester examinations. Project works are also monitored and assessed by the supervisor and by other members of the department by oral presentations related to the project.

The following table shows the number of intake of students and number of students who had graduated from the Department of Commerce from 2000 -2003.

Students Profile per class based on academic year

Academic Year	Intake Year	Passed out Year	Student Intake	Graduates	Graduates			
					1 st Class	2 nd Upper	2 nd Lower	Pass
2002/2003 2002/2003(A)	2003	2008	17 11	17	-	1	3	13
2001/2002	2002	2006	34	25	-	4	9	12
2000/2001	2001	2005	30	17	1	-	6	10
1999/2000 1998/1999	2000	2004	26 28	51	-	1	7	43
Total			146	110	1	6	25	78

According to the above table out of 146 students only 1 student achieved the first class, 6 students 2nd Upper and 25 students' 2nd Lower class passes. Comparing student intake and completion it evident that 36 students are not completed the degree for various reasons. It seems to be 25% of incompleteness is reported from 6 batches of students. 22% of students got the classes and 53% of students got the passes. Overall 75% of students completed the degree.

According to the SER files are maintained for all students, on paper and on registered computers, and can be accessed by authorized users. Records contain information such as units taken, attendance, marks for coursework and examinations. The University is reviewing its policies in this area. During the site visit no evidences found to prove the records maintained.

The department is keeping continuous attention on student's progress and achievements towards the main learning objectives of the degree program. Care is taken at the induction process to answer their problems. Specially developed indicators are not available to measure the student progress. Students are confirmed that all lecturers are available for consultations any time during the week days.

According to the SER department has taken many strategies to maintain student's progress and achievements from the student's selection to their first destination of employments. Following are some significant points, such as offering updated curriculum, providing adequate facilities, organized various skill development programs, applying attractive methods of teaching. Reviewers observed final year students presentations, which is in appropriate level. Reviewers also observed several lecturing and practical sessions during the site visit.

Although the members of the staff believe that their students are successful in securing employment after graduation, it was noted that the department does not maintain a record of their output. It is strongly suggested that the department should pay attention to develop a database of their graduates. If possible it is worth to initiate alumni of the department.

When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Quality of Students, Student Progress and Achievements could be judged as ‘SATISFACTORY’

4.4 The extent and Use of Student Feedback

The DC believes that student feedback is highly influential for the development and sustainability of the degree program in various ways, and therefore adopts various forms and strategies to get the students feedback to the greater extent. According to the SER, DC adapting following methods to get the student feedback, namely formal questionnaire survey, and through discussion at the student staff meetings.

According to the SER, DC used the general quality assurance mechanisms that operate within the university. Summary of the current quality assurance mechanism within the faculty is given below.

Programme level	Committee of faculty student Counsellors appointed by Faculty Board 1 st Year- Mr. N. Logeswaran, Mr. R.Uthayakumar, Mrs. S.Sritharan, 2 nd Year- Mr.T.Prabaharan, Mr. V.Kanagasingam, Mrs.L.D.Victor, 3 rd Year- Mr. S.Balendran. Mr. S.Jeyarajah, 4 th Year- Mr. S. Soundaralingam, Mrs.V.R.Ragel,
Unit level	Examination paper scrutiny board meeting, Student Questionnaires and or formal verbal sessions with students
Individual level	Informal student feedback via demonstrators, Tutors and Student Counsellors

The DC provided a structured questionnaire for lecturers to obtain feedback of students at the end of each semester on nature of the subject delivery, clarity, use of power points, OHP etc. Students ranking is scaled between 1 and 5. This is a compulsory evaluation, is started very recently by the DC. According to the explanation given by the staff, the lecturers obtain student feedback relevant to the quality of teaching from the students through informal methods.

Such feedbacks are supposed to be evaluated and monitored by the Head of the Department. The Head of the Department will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the each of the staff in teaching his/her subject. Following steps are taken to improve the teaching quality of the staff.

- i. The permanent staff needs to follow teaching methodology course conducted either one of universities in Sri Lanka.
- ii. Staffs frequently attend one or two day seminar or workshop. (These seminars or workshop are usually by international consultants)

Reviewers so the document evidence of feedback evaluations and comments made by the HOD for some course units.

Other than the formal methods all the staff discuss with the students of their problems at the end of the lectures, during contact hours and other meetings. Also students are free to talk with any staff member at any time of the day.

A cordial atmosphere prevails among students in the DC staff. These students are taken to various projects outside the university. These arrangements are really strengthen the relationship between faculty staff and students.

The lecturers are very enthusiastic to get qualitative and quantitative feedback from the students of their teaching performance. This seems to have helped the lecturers in the department to improve their teaching process. This situation seems a good sign from the point of view of the students as well as teachers because this creates a positive atmosphere to improve and maintain a good student teacher relationship.

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

Though the SER reported that the Department recently started postgraduate studies lead to MBA. Reviewers found that this program is not belongs to the DC. There is no separate postgraduate programme conducted by the department.

Currently, the Department’s role for postgraduate studies is limited to work as a service department. Only few Lecturers are involved with teaching for the Master of Business Administration degree program offered by the Dept. of Management and the Master of Development Economics degree program offered by the Dept. of Economics.

Postgraduate Studies Unit of the FCM recently started postgraduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) leads to Master of Business Administration (MBA). The Department of Commerce provides following courses.

- | | | | |
|------|----------|--|-----------------------------|
| i. | PGR 02 | Statistics | – as a pre-requisite course |
| ii. | PGR 05 | Accounting | – as a pre-requisite course |
| iii. | PGM 092 | Research Methods | – as a core subject |
| iv. | PGO 0022 | Entrepreneurship Development & Small Business Management | – as an optional subject |
| v. | MBA 014 | Advanced Research Methods | – as a core subject |

Postgraduate Studies Unit of the FCM also conducts Master in Development Economics (MDE). Duration of the programme is 18 months. The Department of Commerce offers following courses.

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| i. | MDE 092 | Research Methods | – as a core subject |
| ii. | MDO 022 | Regional Enterprise Development | – as an optional subject |

Senior lecturers of the Department of commerce play a significant role in conducting the MBA, PGDM and MDE faculty programs. They are engage in lecturing and supervising the MBA students.

All most all lecturers in the Department have either completed the master degree or are following master programmes. Few publications related to some senior academic members of the Department are available in the faculty journal. In publishing the faculty journal, senior staff members of the Department also contribute as an editor in charge.

Due to the lack of senior lecturers no research culture was established within the department. Junior lectures are also not encouraged to do research due to less number of staff available in the department. It is important to establish subject groups to improve the research culture within the department. This helps the department to have some joint publications related to the accounting, finance and commerce.

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

4.6 Peer Observation

According to the SER, Department currently operates a peer observation system. But no formal evidences found to prove the observation system during the site visit. Some lecturers inform that they are practicing some kind of peer evaluation in an informal manner. However, no documentary evident is available.

The observation of documents proved that there is a practice of paper moderation by senior academics within the university or outside. All question papers are subject to moderation by another lecturer and answer scripts are marked by two lecturers, which is a general practice in Sri Lankan universities.

Departmental meetings are held to discuss various matters and staff members share their views. All the staff members participated in curricular revision and other academic activities. In line with university guidance the department expects to operate an organized peer observation system very soon. Though the department meetings are conducted, no minutes are maintained.

It is very important to conduct monthly department meetings to discuss the matters related to the degree program and other student related matters by the department.

When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Peer Observation could be judged as ‘UNSATISFACTORY’.

4.7 Skills Development

Skill development is included in departments’ course units and in the learning, teaching, and assessment methods they used. The skills development is embedded in all levels from the first year to the final year. In the 3rd year all the students are allowed for training in some firms such as Banks and Insurance companies, where they can get maximum skills.

The students are able to obtain vast skills in IT by following practical classes. The optional course units are designed for getting skills development. Students in third year and final year are able to select the other optional course units and improve their skills. Reviewers found that the numbers of optional courses list under the list are not offering to the students.

All the final year students gain practice in conducting research and making presentations. They receive peer and staff feedback and have other opportunities improve their skills in communication. By the time they make their final presentations on the research projects they are normally confident and have the necessary skills.

In order to improve in the knowledge and skill in the research methods, all the students are trained as a good researcher under the supervision of senior lecturers of the department. Each student is required to submit a project report on selected diverse topics. A viva voce examination is faced by the students before handing over the final copy of the report.

A great number of skills (few of them to mention here are; conversation skills, computer and IT skills, presentation skills, inter personal skills and demonstration skills) to be developed by the undergraduates have been identified and necessary facilities have been made available to undergraduates within the University with difficulties. Practically, each undergraduate is officially allocated a minimum of five hours a week for their computer studies plus practical. These laboratories are well equipped with the required logistic facilities and physical and human resources. The laboratories are open for 10 hours a day, five days a week. 150 students can be accommodated at a time, in these laboratories. All undergraduates have access to any of these computer laboratories, irrespective of the department which they belong to.

Undergraduates have been facilitated with four English Language courses (total of 8 credits) during the whole programme. The medium of instruction of the total four year programme is English. Undergraduates, though had encountered difficulties during the first semester of the first year, had later found improved.

All most all undergraduates who had undergone their education in their mother tongue (Tamil) seem very much conversant in English language especially when they come to the 2nd half of the programme run by the department of Commerce and therefore the improvements so far shown by the undergraduates in their English proficiency in the university seems acceptable.

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

4.8 Academic Guidance and Counselling

Once the prevailing conditions in the area are taken into account, a well-defined and progressive student counselling appears to be one of the important aspects to maintain social harmony and undergraduate education. The Faculty has a sufficient number of academic members appointed as Student Counsellors and they work in collaboration with the male senior student counsellor. In addition, the Faculty has also appointed student advisors recently.

Help and guidance are readily available from staff and from other accessible sources. Course details and information on academic support are contained in units and programme prospectus, and on Internet sites. Day to day arrangements is communicated through staff announcement in teaching sessions, email (all new students are automatically assigned an email address) and/or notice board. Lecturers recommend textbooks and other learning aids as appropriate.

The team of counsellors has taken several measures to overcome problems such as ragging and other stress situations. The team noted that Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim students are living and studying here in harmony. This is highly commendable and encouraging. Discussions with the students also revealed that the existing counselling service is effective and that the students are satisfied with the counselling services provided. However, there was

neither a specific place allocated to carry out counselling services nor there was a record of the performed services.

Lecturers are encouraged to help students find whatever additional support or advice is required. Faculty Student Counsellors are available to provide support to students, where students need professional guidance on personal problems; academic staff encourages them to consult the University's counselling service. Discussion between students and members of the Counselling Service are strictly confidential.

The academic staff members in the department of Commerce have volunteered at several occasions not only to provide academic guidance and counselling but also to help the undergraduates in numerous ways.

Many undergraduates in the department are involved in the extracurricular activities like sports. This aspect again demands a proper academic guidance and counselling programme. The review team did not see any indication of students contact hours in the time tables of the lecturers. Therefore, it is suggested to set apart student contact hours in the personal time tables. However, according to the explanations given by the staff and students, there are evidences that the staffs are ready for supporting the students as the needs arise.

While congratulating the student counsellors for the effective service rendered and devotion under tight conditions, the review team recommends allocating a place (room) for Student Counselling and start maintaining records of the counselling services provided and achievements made to make it more visible and effective in future.

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

5. CONCLUSIONS

For the purpose of convenient readability, conclusions are presented in statement form as given below under respective headings.

1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Strengths/Good Practices

- Considerable number of IT and English course units are available in the program.
- The department conduct the B.Com degrees in English medium.
- The degree program consists of an independent research report.
- Many specialization areas available for the student's options.
- Credit, GPA and Semester system were adopted
- Industrial training is incorporated within the degree curriculum

Weaknesses

- Only two specializations are offered to the students
- No students admitted to the B.Com Accounting and Finance specialization during last two years
- Student preferences are not counted for the selection of specialisations.
- The Department does not conduct tutorial classes.

- Though the optional subjects are available students are not given the chance of selecting optional course units.
- Final year Research report is allocated only 3 credits.
- Semester subjects are changing time to time.
- Computerized accounting subjects are not offering to the other B.Com students.
- English language ability of the students need to be more improved

2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Strengths/Good Practices

- Some of the course contents issued by the department provide guidelines for the students to improve their quality.
- Assessment requirements are explained to the students at the beginning of the course units
- According to the timetable, student workload is sufficiently balanced.
- The objective of the course, learning outcome, detailed syllabus and assessment methods are basically given in the course materials, and the objectives and summary of the course content were given in the faculty hand book.
- The DC uses a wide range of teaching and learning methods appropriate to the development of highly competent graduates.
- Attempt to maintain a better learning environment providing necessary teaching and learning facilities.
- The library usage by the undergraduates is at an acceptable level.

Weaknesses

- No special calendar is prepared to balance the distribution of assignments throughout the semester.
- No tutorial classes for the students
- Students are not happy with some of the lecturers teaching
- IT practical type of subjects are assessed based on theory and not in practical manner
- Delays in issuing final examination results
- No proper student evaluation system available

3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievement

Strengths/Good Practices

- Separate window for student admission is proposed.
- Care is taken at the induction process to answer their problems.
- All lecturers are available for consultations any time during the week days.
- Behaviour of both lecturers and undergraduates are positive
- Undergraduate Research Forum is functioning to publish their research articles.

Weaknesses

- 25% of incompleteness is reported from 6 batches of students
- Only 22% of students got the classes (1 first class for 146 student completed)
- No other achievements are achieved by the B.Com students
- Specially developed indicators are not available to measure the student progress.
- No proper recordkeeping system available within the department

4. The Extent and Use of Student Feedback

Strengths/Good Practices

- DC used the general quality assurance mechanisms that operate within the university.
- The Head and the staff practices an open door policy,
- The dedication shown towards solving the undergraduate problems by the academic staff members in the department is appreciable.
- Formal teaching evaluation system is in practice. A questionnaire is developed to evaluate the teacher.
- Other than the formal methods all the staff discuss with the students of their problems at the end of the lectures, during contact hours and other meeting
- A cordial atmosphere prevails among students in the DC staff

Weaknesses

- Most of the student feedbacks are not consider for the improvements
- Formal departmental student committees are not available
- Students Evaluation sheets are not analysed therein feedback could not be incorporated.
- Formal student contact hours are not incorporated within the timetables

5. Postgraduate Studies

Strengths/Good Practices

Post Graduate unit is established under the faculty.

- The trust developed by the post graduate candidates towards the staff of the Department.
- The senior academic members of the Department have had the opportunity to perform as a lecturer and thesis supervisor.
- The recognition gained by the senior academic members in the DC by serving as an editor in charge for the faculty journal.
- Having a fully fledged library which is open from 0800 hrs to 1800 hrs, in five week days and from 0800 hrs to 1600 hrs, in weekends with a dedicated library staff.

Weaknesses

- Less publication of research articles by the academic members of the DC for faculty journal.
- Junior lectures are also not encouraged to do research due less number of staff available for the Department.
- No research culture within the department

6. Peer Observation

Strengths/Good Practices

- Moderation and second marking system are in practice.
- All the staff members in the DC participated in curricular revision and other academic activities.

Weaknesses

- No evidence is fund to prove application of peer evaluation teaching and assessing
- No common room to share views of staff members.
- No rewarding systems are available for the staff that performed well.
- Departmental meetings are not regularly held.
- Group teaching and core teaching system is not available
- Inadequate qualified staff to observe each other

7. Skills Development

Strengths/Good Practices

- Skill development is included in departments' course units and in the learning, teaching, and assessment methods they used.
- In the 3rd year all the students are allowed for training in some firms such as Banks and Insurance companies, where they can get maximum skills.
- The students are able to obtain vast skills in IT by following practical classes
- The optional course units are designed for getting skills development.
- All the final year students gain practice in conducting research and making presentations.
- Each student is required to submit a project report on selected diverse topics and a viva voce examination is faced by them before handing over the final copy of the report.
- IT laboratories are well equipped with the required logistic facilities and physical and human resources and are open for 10 hours a day, five days a week.
- Undergraduates have been facilitated with four English Language courses (total of 8 credits) during the whole programme.
- The medium of instruction of the total four year programme is English.

Weaknesses

- Not organizing regular field trips, guest lectures, and other activities like organizing seminars and community related services make opportunities to improve, organize and develop leadership skills among undergraduates.
- Student bodies are not available within the department to improve skill-based activities
- Students are not encourage to organize various non subject related activities to developed various skills required for modern environment
- Practical training is limited for three month period.
- No freedom for the students to select their optional subjects
- Computer based accounting subject is not offering to the B.Com special students

8. Academic Guidance and Counselling

Strengths/Good Practices

- The Faculty has a sufficient number of academic members appointed as Student Counsellors and they work in collaboration with the male senior student counsellor
- Orientation program conducted by the university for fresh students gives familiar environment in the University.
- Course details and information on academic support are contained in units and programme prospectus, and on Internet sites.
- The Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim students are living and studying here in harmony.
- Lecturers are encouraged to help students find whatever additional support or advice is required.

Weaknesses

- Non availability of a well thought, properly designed academic counselling program in the department
- Lack of formal training for staff on the student counselling and guidance.
- Non existence of a separate room for student counselling.
- Non-availability of a sound and a common record maintenance system in relation to academic guidance and counselling in the department for future reference.
- students contact hours in the time tables of the lecturers

Based on the observations made during the visit by the Review Team and as per the facts discussed above the judgments given to those eight aspects under review are as follows:

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

The overall judgment is suspended

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of weaknesses identified, reviewers would like to make following recommendations in order to improve relevance and quality of the B. Com specialization in Enterprise Development B. Com specialization in Accounting & Finance and B.Com Special degree programmes.

- It is advised to form an industry advisory council for obtaining stakeholders' input for the curriculum revision process. To achieve the objectives of the course unit system it is required to offer optional and auxiliary course units into the curriculum. This ensures the flexibility of the student choice.
- It is advisable to incorporate teaching of computer based accounting as a course unit within the all degree programmes.
- To improve the employability of the graduates of the department, it is advisable to incorporate practical training as a compulsory credit course for the final year second semester.
- Most of the IT related subjects need to be tested in practical manner using computer practical papers as final examinations.
- It is important to arrange an official calendar for tutorial classes especially for accounting, finance and IT course units.
- Introduction of Sinhala Language course unit with at least 3 credits as a compulsory course unit for Tamil speaking students and Tamil language for Sinhala speaking students.

- Incorporate feedback from the undergraduates in teaching as well as a formal peer observation method would help increasing the productivity of the department.
- It is high time to establish research groups within the department. These group members need to be given the opportunity to develop subjects related to the academic self. To encourage the staff research it is advisable to have research grant for the faculty.
- It is high time to form a student's subject association to organize extracurricular activities with the objective of widening the rapport between the academic staff and students. By and large formation of such a student association will definitely improve the skill base of the students and their marketability.
- It is recommended to have proper filing and database management system established within the department to access important data related to the curriculum revisions as well as current and passed out students of the department
- It is important to establish alumni association for the department to get their support to develop market oriented degree programmes for the department.
- It is recommended to introduce and organize a peer evaluation system under the supervision of the Dean of the Faculty or by employing an eminent academic who is acceptable to the academic staff members of the department
- It is recommended to provide proper place for student counsellors.
- It will be very useful if course manuals can be developed for all the courses conducted by the department. A list of compulsory additional readings along with articles published recently in the journals also is a must to make students aware about the recent developments in the discipline.
- It is recommended to start most popular program B.Com specialization in Accounting & Finance program by removing unnecessary barriers and considering student preferences.
- The present student feedback system needs further improvement to create responsibility among the academic staff under the guidance of the head of the department.
- The staffs in the DC will be given a formal training on Academic Guidance & Counselling.

7. ANNEXES

Annex 1. AGENDA FOR THE SUBJECT REVIEW VISIT

Day 01- 28.07.2008

08.30 – 09.00	Private Meeting of Review Panel with QAA Council Representatives
09.00 – 09.30	Discuss the Agenda for the Visit
09.30 – 10.30	Meeting(s) with the Vice-Chancellor / Chairman, Internal QA Unit / Dean, Head of the Dept. (<i>Working Tea</i>)
10.30 - 11.30	Department Presentation on the Self Evaluation Report
11.30 – 12.30	Discussion
12.30 – 13.30	<i>Lunch</i>
13.30 – 14.30	Observing Departmental Facilities
14.30 – 15.30	Observing other Facilities (Library, Computer Centre etc.)
15.30 – 16.30	Meeting with Department Academic Staff
16.30 – 17.30	Meeting with Undergraduate Students
17.30 – 18.30	Brief Meeting of Reviewers

Day 02 - 29.07.2008

09.00 – 09.30	Meeting with Senior Student Counselor and Student Counselors
09.30 – 10.00	Observing Teaching – Lecture
10.00 – 11.00	Observing Documents (<i>Working Tea</i>)
11.00 – 12.00	Meeting with Technical Staff and Other Non-Academic Staff
12.00 – 12.30	Meeting with Postgraduate Students
12.30 – 13.30	<i>Lunch</i>
13.30 – 14.00	Observing Teaching – Lecture
14.00 – 14.30	Observing Students' Presentations
14.30 – 15.00	Observing Teaching – Practical Class
15.00 – 15.30	Observing Documents
15.30 – 17.00	Meeting of Reviewers

Day 03 - 30.07.2008

09.00 – 09.30	Reviewers Private Discussion
09.30 – 10.30	Meeting with Vice-Chancellor / Chairman, Internal QA Unit / Dean, Head and Staff for Reporting
10.30 – 13.00	Report Writing