

# SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA**

23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009

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Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council established in 2005 under the University Grants Commission/ Ministry of Education with financial support from the IRQUE (Improvement of Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education) project is to ensure quality, continuous development and efficient performance of Sri Lankan higher education institutions, and to gain the confidence of the community in their graduates in accordance with internationally recognized evaluation mechanism. University accountability for quality and standards is a key factor in promoting and safeguarding public confidence in Sri Lankan higher education. There are four main components of a quality assurance program:

- Institutional Review
- Subject Review
- Subject Benchmarking and
- Credit and qualification Framework.

Being a key components in the national quality assurance system for Sri Lanka, subject review evaluates the quality of education within a department of study, in contrast to the institutional review which focuses on the powers and responsibilities which universities hold for quality and standards. Subject review is carried out in relation to the subject aims and objectives set by each program of study pertaining to both undergraduate and taught postgraduate programs.

Subject review examines the wide range of influences that shape the learning experiences and achievements of students. It covers the full breadth of teaching and learning activities, including direct observation of classroom, tutorial class, laboratory situations, the curriculum, staff and staff development, the application of resources (library, IT, equipment) and student support and guidance. This range of activities is captured within a core set of eight aspects of provision.

The aspects of provision are:

- Curriculum design, content and review
- Teaching, learning and assessment methods
- Quality of students
- The extent and use of student feedback
- Postgraduate studies
- Peer observation
- Skills development and
- Academic guidance and counseling.

The review method has two main processes, internal and external evaluations. Internal evaluation is the self assessment in the subject based on the program's own aims and objectives and set out in the structure provided by the core set of aspects of provision.

The external evaluation comprises a three-day review visit carried out by a team of reviewers. The purpose of the review visit is to review, consider and test the evidence provided by the study program in the light of the aims and intended student learning outcomes. Reviewers do not use any externally set standards against which the programs are judged. The review teams will provide a separate judgement of each subject review aspect. The review team will

, emphasizing strengths, good practices and weaknesses.  
 use one of three judgements:

- satisfactory
- unsatisfactory.

In judgements of 'good' or 'satisfactory' review team will wish to highlight strengths and good practice in the aspect; and in 'unsatisfactory' category there are likely to be no examples of strengths or good practice.

This report presents the findings of a review of the quality of education provided by the Department of Sociology of the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The Review Team comprising of Prof. D. Atapattu, University of Ruhuna, Dr. S.M.M. Ismail, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka and Dr. (Ms) S.M.K. Herath, University of Colombo visited the Department of Sociology of the University of Jaffna during the period 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2009. The review was conducted by adhering to the guidelines provided in the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The review process was based on the Self Evaluation Report (SERs) submitted by the Department of Sociology and supported by the knowledge and experience gained by a three-day site visit to the Department.

The SER of the Department of Sociology has been prepared under following headings:

1. Overview
2. Learning outcomes
3. Students
4. Staff
5. Facilities
6. Curriculum design and content
7. Teaching, Learning and assessment methods
8. Quality of Students
9. Postgraduate programs
10. Skills development
11. Academic guidance and Counseling

The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims and learning outcomes given in the SER and the knowledge gained through the site visit. The following eight aspects of education were reviewed at the subject level:

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

The evaluation of eight aspects was supplemented by the:

Discussions held with the Vice Chancellor who was the former Head of the Department, Acting Dean, Acting Head of Department, Librarian, academic staff, non academic

Undergraduate students and postgraduate students

É Observation of department facilities (lecture rooms, staff rooms, office space etc.) and other facilities of the faculty and the university (library, computer unit etc.).

É Observing teaching sessions and student presentations

É Reviewing documents available at the Department, such as examination papers, answer scripts, minutes of departmental meetings, student dissertations, publications of the staff, Journal of the Sociology Society, Manudamö, students' feedback forms, lecture handouts etc.

Each of the eight aspects was judged as good / satisfactory / unsatisfactory, paying attention to the strengths, good practices and weaknesses found in each area.

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

The setting up of a university campus in Jaffna has been a long standing aspiration of the people of Jaffna. Accordingly the declaration was made on 15th July 1974 by Dr. Al-Haj-Badi-Ud-Din Mahmud, Minister of Education and Pro - Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka to declare open Jaffna Campus at the Parameshwara College premises, Thirunelvely. Prof. K. Kailasapathy was appointed as the first President of the Jaffna Campus.

On 06<sup>th</sup> October 1974, the Jaffna campus, the sixth campus of the University of Sri Lanka was ceremonially inaugurated by the Hon. Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranayaka. Initially, only the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Sciences were opened to the students. With the implementation of the University Act No. 16 of 1978, Jaffna campus became an independent and autonomous university as the University of Jaffna with effect from January 1979. Prof. V. Vithiananthan was the first Vice Chancellor.

Present Faculties include Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Business Studies (Vavuniya Campus), Faculty of Applied Science (Vavuniya Campus). Vavuniya campus was a new addition which was established in 1997 adding two new faculties to the Jaffna University.

In addition to the above mentioned faculties Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts (RAFA) and Siddha Medicine units are also functioning providing the students with the facility to engage in the study of two important study streams that are inherently linked to the culture and society of Jaffna.

University students and staff have launched numerous activities in the nearby communities extending the study programs of the university to the societal level in order to prevent the university community from leading an ivory tower existence. University of Jaffna has been able to perform the knowledge producing and pedagogical roles in a satisfactory manner within a short period of its existence despite the war that prevailed for three decades causing much strains and crises in the society and its people in the northern part of the country.

was started as one of the first faculties in the University of K. Kailasapathy as its first Dean. At the beginning, the Faculty of Humanities had only four departments of study, namely Tamil, Sinhala, Hindu Civilization and History.

The Faculty of Arts was established later with 6 new departments; Economics, Geography, Islamic Civilization, Sanskrit, Philosophy and Language, and Cultural Studies. At present 18 Academic departments are functioning within the Faculty of Arts providing the students the facility to immerse themselves in the study of broad range of disciplines.

### **Department of Sociology**

Teaching of Sociology was first begun in the Faculty of Arts in 1980 as a subject taught under the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Later in 1982 it was brought under the Department of Economics introducing Sociology as a subject to final year Economics Special Degree students and General Degree students.

In 1990, Special Degree Program in Sociology was started in consultation with scholars from other universities. In July 1998 two study streams were amalgamated within a single new department in the Faculty of Arts, establishing the Department of Political Science & Sociology.

In December 2007 Sociology was separated from Political Science and a new Department of Sociology was established. This bifurcation of the departments of Political Science and Sociology has supported the independent development of both disciplines. Prof. N. Shanmugalingam was the first Head of the Department of Sociology who is the present Vice Chancellor of the University of Jaffna. The department faces numerous difficulties including lack of space, equipments and teaching staff, however, it continues to be one of the most popular departments in the Faculty of Arts drawing large numbers of students in the faculty.

## **3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **3.1 Aims**

- Educate and empower students to become informed, effective and responsible citizens who embrace diversity in their communities, societies and the world
- Offer strong undergraduate major programs and exposes majors to the breadth and richness of Sociology and Anthropology
- Contribute essential learning opportunities in Sociology and Anthropology
- Teaches students in innovation, exciting and effective ways and provide them with independent study, honours and capstone experiences that deepen learning
- Provides students with important opportunities for civic engagement through independent research, internships and service learning
- Work closely within students in collaboration research and projects that serve the university, student and the community participate in multidisciplinary relationships and programs pursue new interdisciplinary curricular initiatives



Sri Lankan social structure and culture. An awareness of the need for social harmony and the ability to work and interact well with people from different backgrounds in the complex society of Sri Lanka.

- The enthusiasm and skills towards a continuous learning process and to facilitate towards the achievements of the aims of the department.
- To be self-motivated, creative, and able to meet challenges and have received career guidance and being taught basic management skills.
- To stimulate the opportunity for students from other departments within the faculty to study social structures and issues at a level appropriate to their needs.
- To develop inter-personal and communication skills through our team works and research projects. It helps to develop their future life.
- To be able to contribute to and pursue advanced learning and research relevant to regional and national development.
- To support the teaching staff to widen the knowledge and strengthen the skills which ultimately lead forwards their career development?
- To maintain an informal, supportive and responsive atmosphere in order to promote the enthusiastic learning towards a high completion rate.
- To set opportunity for students to develop the skill and enthusiasm required for life-long learning.

#### **4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM**

##### **4.1 Curriculum Design, Content and Review**

The Department of Sociology offers courses for BA General Degree and Special Degree in Sociology. The Department also offers Post Graduate courses in collaboration with the Faculty of Graduate Studies, allowing the students the facility to continue their studies in Sociology to the highest levels if they wish. The Department has had two major study streams earlier, namely stream in Anthropology and the stream in Sociology. However, the stream in Anthropology has been scraped off recently while incorporating the Anthropology courses that are most relevant for the study of Sociology within the study program. This can be considered a wise decision when the number of teaching faculty remaining in the Department is considered.

The Department offers a total number of 28 course units for the four years in the General and Special Degree programs in Sociology. There is no major difference between the Special and General Degree programs, apart from that the General Degree is a three year degree program and the Special Degree is a four year degree program. General Degree students are not deprived of any course units that are in offer for the Special Degree students. Eight elective course units are also offered by the Department for both Special and General Degree students. Since the Special Degree students are expected to obtain 120 credits to obtain the degree in accordance with the general normative standards followed by Sri Lankan universities, almost all the course units offered by the Department have become unofficially mandatory for the Special Degree students. Due to lack of academic staff in the Department, it seems realistic to offer a limited number of course units; however, the students do not have the option of selecting from a number of units according to their own preference of subject areas.

Course unit is made compulsory for the General Degree provides a wider flexibility to the General Degree students to choose units, yet, it does not necessitates them to have any background in basic theoretical or methodological knowledge in the subject for the completion of the three year degree with Sociology as a subject.

All course units are placed in a careful order allowing the gradual advancement of sociological knowledge. The first year starts with the foundations of Sociology imparting more advanced conceptual, theoretical and pragmatic knowledge in the latter years. Nevertheless, some overlapping could be noticed with regard to certain course units. For instance, ASYC 12013 ó Introduction to Classic Thinkers of Sociology and ASYC 21013 ó Main Currents in Sociological Theory could be overlapping. Although the latter discusses major theoretical trends and the former approaches the theoretical views through the perspective of individual thinkers, it would not be easy to separate the theoretical approaches from individual perspectives. It would also be more appropriate to offer the two methodology courses currently offered in the Second Year in two academic years instead of one. Research Methodology course number ASYC 21023 covers a vast subject area ranging from scientific methods and types of research design to qualitative and quantitative techniques. Course content here seems to be too extensive for the second year students to grasp within duration of 15 weeks. The methodology unit offered in the second semester of the second year, ASYC 22033 ó Quantitative Analysis in Sociology, just after learning the basic methods seems to be premature. It could fit much better in the third year as the students could be allowed adequate time to grasp the data collection tools before concentrating on data analysis techniques. Further, the same course unit could combine both forms of data analysis techniques, qualitative and quantitative, which have become essential in sociological understanding today. Course unit on Introduction to Sociology that is taught for the First year seem to be somewhat advanced for the first year level. large number of topics that are included could be designed merely to provide the students of the basic understanding of all major themes within the discipline, however, including too many areas could limit the time spent on each of them thus preventing proper grasp of the basic concepts.

A number of core courses that are considered essential in laying the foundation in Sociology, and new and more pragmatic sociology units are offered by the department providing students with access to conventional as well as newly advancing and practical knowledge in the discipline. Some of the course units offered by the Department seem to cater to the regional needs including Caste in World Culture, peace studies and refugee studies.

The Department is currently in the process of completing a major curriculum review. It would be possible to address certain drawbacks concerning the course units during this curriculum revision process. It would be recommended that the Department carefully looks into matters concerning the consistency of course outlines, including objectives and intended learning outcomes, and up to date bibliographies.

Dissertation component of the Department which is a field based and a mandatory element for the final year special degree students is worthy of mentioning. With the limited number of staff, the Department manages to continue this very essential component in sociological training which needs close scrutiny of the academic members of the Department, often one to one basis supervision. Each member of the staff has taken the responsibility of a larger number of students for dissertation supervision. It would be important to consider this aspect in the selection of students for the Special Degree program, as it is not realistic for each



too many students for supervision which could affect the  
 unless steps are taken to increase the cadre of the  
 considering the demand for the subject.

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Curriculum Design, Content and Review can be judged as GOOD.***

## **4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods**

The Department offers 28 core courses and eight elective units for BA General and Special Degree programs in Sociology. All core course modules are of three (3) credits and electives account for two (2) credits for the second year and three (3) credits for the third year. The number of teaching hours for each core course is 45 from which 30 hours are allocated to lectures and the remaining 15 hours are devoted for tutorials.

There is an acute shortage of internal staff to conduct lectures. The academic staff comprises of one Professor and 4 Probationary Lecturers and two Temporary Asst. Lecturers. The only Professor in the Department has been appointed to the Post of Vice Chancellor in the University and therefore, the availability of his services to the Department is very limited. As a result of staff limitation, the teaching load of the staff is quite heavy. Each member of the staff conducts an average of 20 hours of lectures per week. Excessive teaching load seems to consume much of the time of the academic staff that could be utilized for research and postgraduate studies.

Although the internal staff is very limited in the Department of Sociology, arrangement has been made to obtain the services of Visiting Lecturers from other institutes and the University's own staff from other faculties and departments. In spite of the staff shortage, the commitment and dedication of the existing staff have helped the teaching programs run smoothly without disruption. The Department is privileged of being able to mobilize a group of eminent scholars as Visiting Professors to conduct some of its regular lecture programs and also to deliver guest lectures.

When the course module system is adopted to replace the traditional curriculum, it is necessary to introduce other innovative components of teaching learning process such as course guides, comprehensive course outlines consisting of course objectives, learning outcomes, detailed syllabus, assessment methods, and recommended readings to improve teaching learning process. The efforts made by the Department in this direction are deemed to be inadequate.

Another positive aspect of the teaching-learning process is the mandatory requirement for a minimum level of attendance. Eighty percent attendance in lectures is mandatory for a student to sit for the end-semester examination of the relevant course module. If the student's attendance for a course unit is in the range of 50% - 75%, the highest Grade Point that could be given to that course unit is C, whatever the performance may be. If the attendance is less than 50%, the highest Grade Point will be D+.

The learning process still depends heavily on teacher-centred instructions. Formal lectures are conducted with restrictive use of audio-visual methods and interactive learning methods. Due to non-availability of adequate number of modern teaching equipment such as multimedia projectors, laptops, OHPs, chalk board has become the main means of teaching in

ned, however, that the use of an overhead projector or slides would have certainly increased the effectiveness of facilities to make video presentations and multimedia projections, innovative methods such as visual descriptions (drawings) have been devised teaching-learning material to explain and describe some sociological concepts and phenomena.

The limitation of space seems have an adverse impact on the learning environment. There is only one room for the Department and it is shared by both academic staff members and non academic staff members for their office. Needless to mention that in a congested environment of this form, it is impossible to concentrate on a serious academic work. It is also not possible for the students to meet their lecturers and engage in an academic discussion without disturbing the other staff members.

The University Library stocks a good collection of International journals in Sociology although the availability of latest textbooks in Sociology is very limited. Students have complained that the lack of multiple copies of certain textbooks in Tamil medium causes difficulties on their learning process.

The language seems to be a major barrier for students to engage in a deep learning process during their years of study in the university. Although the students show an obvious keenness in learning English, the teaching or examination procedures do not seem to take this factor into consideration. None of the courses are taught in English, yet most teachers provide the technical terms in English. The emphasis placed on the improving of English language proficiency of students in the study program is inadequate. At present, English language proficiency is considered only as a condition to receive the degree certificate, but not as an integral part of the learning process. This lethargic attitude towards English language needs to be changed.

With respect to assessments, the Review Team observed that the Department utilizes a combination of different assessment methods for the overall evaluation of students progress throughout the course. Each course module is evaluated by a course grade which is based on the total marks obtained for continuous assessments and end-semester examination. The relative weights assigned to continuous assessments and end-semester examinations are 25% and 75% respectively. The methods used for continuous assessments may vary among courses (i.e. tutorials, presentations, group assignment, field reports etc.) and they are decided by the subject lecturers with the approval of the Faculty board. The weights assigned for the continuous assessment seems to be too low as compared to the expected standards of the course modular system. Less emphasis on continuous assessments inhibits self learning ability of the students which needs to be enhanced at the university level.

According to the revised curriculum introduced in 2005, the duration of the end-semester examination is determined by the credit value of each course module. As noted above the core modules are of three credits and electives account for 2 credits in the second year and three in the third year. Accordingly, for core modules, the exam duration is three hours and for electives, it varies between two hours and three hours. The end-semester exam question paper for each core module consists of eight (8) questions out of which five (5) questions including one compulsory question should be answered. For elective modules, question paper consists of five (5) questions and only three (3) questions need to be answered. All question

ation are moderated either by a senior member of the  
other universities.

The grading system adopted by the faculty is in conformity with the international standards. Classes are awarded based on the GPA which will be calculated as a weighted average on the grade points obtained for different course modules.

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods can be judged as SATISFACTORY.***

#### **4.3 Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements**

Recruitment and admission of students to the Faculty of Arts are carried out by the UGC as in other universities and the Department has no control over this process. Sociology is a very popular subject in the Faculty of Arts. There are no pre-requirements to select Sociology as a subject for the General Degree program. Even those students, who do not offer Sociology as a main subject for the General or Special Degree programs, prefer to take some selected course modules offered by the Department such as Research Methodology, Social Communication, Psychology, Social Work, and Poverty Analysis etc. because of their relevance in terms of employment opportunities.

The Department also conducts special programs to recruit new students to its study programs by organizing awareness activities during the inauguration period which lasts for two weeks. Information about course units and possible subject combinations are given to the students during this period. Such activities help the Department to identify and recruit students with keen interest in studying Sociology.

The Department has devised an appropriate methodology to recruit students to the Special Degree program in Sociology. To recruit quality students to the special Degree program, students are selected on the basis of the results of the two semester examinations of the first year. A student should obtain a GPA of 2.7 or more at First Year examinations.

Students' progress is closely monitored by in-course assessment process. Eighty percent attendance rule also ensures continuous participation of students in the learning process. The lecturers in-charge of course units pay special attention to those students who have a record of poor attendance and unsatisfactory performance at in-course assessments. It has been reported that staff will counsel such students 2-3 times per semester.

High performance levels recorded at the Final Examinations are a good indicator of students quality and achievements. As given in the Table below, the percentage of students achieved honours passes is over 80% during the period 1997-2002.

**SPECIAL DEGREE RESULTS IN SOCIOLOGY, 1997 - 2002**

Class Level	1997/98	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	Total
Second Upper	4	6	8	1	19
Second Lower	6	22	18	7	53
Pass	1	6	9	1	17
Total	11	34	35	9	89

Further confirms the sustainability of the quality of the  
 to the teachers by those who have dropped-out from the  
 but due to other factors beyond their control.

The Review Team observed that most of the dissertations submitted by the Special Degree students were of very high quality

It has been reported informally by the graduates of BA General and Special Degree programs that they can easily find job opportunities in many avenues such as planning service, social service, counseling, NGO sector etc. Even the current undergraduates have shared the same view when the Review Team met with them. Some of these graduates have been recruited as Lecturers in other universities in the country (i.e. Open University, Colombo University, Eastern University, National Institute of Social Development).

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements can be judged as SATISFACTORY.***

#### **4.4 . Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative**

The SER does not mention anything about this aspect. However, in the Department presentation on the subject review, it was noted that both formal and informal methods are used to get students feed back on their study programs. The Review Team also observed some of the questionnaires that had been used to collect information on students feed back by the Department. But the formal questionnaire on student feedback used by the Department at present has not been designed to obtain information on each course unit, rather an evaluation of the entire study program. Therefore, such information does not help in identifying strengths and weaknesses of individual courses and individual lecturers.

It is true that some lecturers, however, have continued the practice of obtaining student feed back over the years, yet no analysis has been done with regard to the information obtained. Therefore, teachers have not been able to get a clear idea about the students' perceptions on the quality of teaching as given in the student feedback forms.

There are ad hoc methods of obtaining feedback such as informal discussions carried out by individual teachers with students, views expressed by the student representatives at the Faculty Board are in operation. The weekly tutorial classes also serves as an indirect method of obtaining student feedback on the study program. It is still not clear how the ad hoc feed back influences changes in course contents, teaching techniques and assessment methods

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative can be judged as SATISFACTORY.***

#### **4.5 Postgraduate Studies**

At present the Department of Sociology does not conduct its own postgraduate programs largely due to limited capacity of the staff, but the department staff have been involved in various aspects of postgraduate studies such as conducting postgraduate teaching, supervision and research. All postgraduate programs of the University of Jaffna are conducted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The Department has contributed to develop a Master of Arts

es under the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Prof. N. the Department designed the curriculum of the M.A. in the Coordinator of this program.

M.Phil. in Sociology program is also academically supported by the Department of Sociology although it is administratively operated by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Research Methodology course for M.Phil. Degree is also offered by the Department of Sociology. Up to Currently eight (8) postgraduate students have registered for M.Phil. Degree in Sociology at the University of Jaffna. One has successfully completed the program. Most of the students who have registered for postgraduate programs several years ago still keep their registration renewed without completing their theses. This seems to be the normal pattern in other universities also with respect to the research-based post graduate programs.

Apart from the involvement of the Department in Postgraduate programs, its staff also has produced a large number of publications to their credit which is commendable.

**It is the view of the Review Team that the Postgraduate Studies can be judged as SATISFACTORY**

#### **4.6 Peer Observation**

The SER does not mention anything about peer observation process in the Department. The Department does not have a regular and formal system of peer evaluation. However, in the multimedia presentation of the SER by the former Head of the Department, Prof. N. Shanmugalingam stated that various forms of informal peer observations are currently practiced in the Department. They include the following activities:

- (i) Observation of the junior staff by the Head of Department and Senior Lecturers in an informal way
- (ii) Junior staff are allowed to attend lectures conducted by senior staff
- (iii) Guidance through departmental meeting to junior staff for preparing lectures and in-course assessment works

It may be more advantageous if peers could attend each others classes and advise on how their teaching methods (i.e. the pace, material, clarity etc.) could be improved. These practices can later be developed into a more formal system thus ensuring that the practice is both regular and properly documented.

However, moderation of question papers and second marking of answer scripts by senior members of the staff within the department or outside the department are practiced.

**It is the view of the Review Team that the Peer Observation can be judged as SATISFACTORY**

#### **4.7 Skills Development**

The Department has taken some steps to improve generic skills as well as subject specific skills of their graduates. As far as subject specific skills are concerned, the Department has embedded them in the curriculum, though they have not been listed out specifically for the benefit of students and teachers. This problem arises because of the absence of course outlines and course guides where course objectives and learning outcomes are specified.



ment of English language proficiency and IT is highly become essential to meet the present demands of the job market. There is a dire need in the Department to include ways to promote IT skills and English proficiency within the curricular of the Department. The course unit related activities do not require students to use computers on a regular basis, nor are the students familiar with web-based learning. At the discussions with the students, it was revealed that students need more hours for IT training. At present, IT course of one semester is conducted during the first year. While endorsing the views of the students, the Review Team feels that steps should be taken in this direction without further delay. Improvement of IT facilities with Internet access is also urgently needed.

The Review Team had the opportunity to observe a number of student presentations. Their presentation skills were of low standard. Most of these presentations took the form of reading notes in front of the audience. Students had not been given a proper training on how to make an effective presentation. They displayed poor skills in handling OHP projectors. PowerPoint presentations were entirely out of their capacity due to two reasons, namely (i) students did not have an adequate IT skills to make PowerPoint presentations (ii) Department did not have a multimedia projector and a laptop computer until recently.

Students reading for the Special Degree are given a training to conduct independent research studies that enhances their research capabilities and writing skills.

**It is the view of the Review Team that the Skills Development can be judged as UNSATISFACTORY**

#### **4.8 Academic Guidance and Counseling:**

Although there is no formal procedure followed in the Department to ensue the students receive academic guidance and counseling, all members of the academic staff are engaged in counseling in an informal manner. At the faculty level, Course Advisors have been appointed for each department to (i) advise students in the selection of courses, especially at the beginning of the academic year (ii) guide students on academic related and administrative matters.

Further, a Lecturer-in-charge is appointed by the department for each course to facilitate (i) in-course assessments (ii) group discussions and individual counseling (iii) preparation of handouts and recommended readings etc.

All final year students in the Special Degree program are assigned an academic supervisor to guide their research projects and the preparation of the dissertations. The effectiveness of this supervision is well evident from the fact that students have produced dissertations of very good quality.

A full time professional counselor is also available in the university to help students in both personal and academic related matters.

**It is the view of the Review Team that the Academic Guidance and Counseling can be judged as GOOD.**



eight aspects studied during the review visit is

Aspect Reviewed	Judgement 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	Satisfactory
Postgraduate Studies	Satisfactory
Peer Observation	Satisfactory
Skills Development	Unsatisfactory
Academic Guidance and Counseling	Good

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

### 1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

#### Strengths:

- Curriculum covers all core areas of the discipline
- Gradual advancement of knowledge from one year to the other
- Practical course units catering to regional needs
- Both general and special degree students are allowed to take all course units offered by the department
- Mandatory field based dissertation component
- Curriculum is flexible with the introduction of electives

#### Weaknesses:

- Overlapping course content
- Content of certain course units are too advanced for the level for which they are taught

### 2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

#### Strengths:

- High degree of commitment by the limited internal staff
- University staff outside the Department also share the burden of conducting lectures in the absence of an adequate internal staff
- Minimum level of attendance has been made mandatory to sit for the end-semester exams
- Innovative teaching techniques such as 'visual descriptions' are used to describe and explain various social phenomena as students are not in a position to move freely out of Jaffna to see such things by themselves due to security problems.
- Grading system and criteria for awarding classes are standard.

staff limits the availability of their time for research

- Absence of comprehensive course outlines with learning outcomes
- Limited use of modern teaching technologies such as multimedia and OHP
- Minimal use of Internet and e-resources in current teaching-learning process
- Absence of internet facilities in the Department
- Extremely limited office space for the staff does not provide a conducive atmosphere to engage in creative work
- Shortage of textbooks in the library
- Relatively low weightage given to continuous assessment in final marks

### **3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievement**

#### **Strengths:**

- Students are enthusiastic and motivated
- Students performance at the examinations are extremely good and encouraging
- Student dissertations are of high quality
- Drop-out rates are negligible
- Relatively high job opportunities

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Department does not maintain a data base to monitor the progress of its graduates

### **4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback**

#### **Strengths:**

- Student feedback is obtained for the entire study program at each level by administering questionnaire
- Informal methods are practiced to obtain student feed back on individual courses

#### **Weaknesses:**

- No formal method is practiced to obtain student feedback for each individual course

### **5. Postgraduate Studies**

#### **Strengths:**

- Department actively contributes to the relevant postgraduate programs conducted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies
- There are many research publications of the staff

#### **Weaknesses:**

- The postgraduate students take relatively very long time to complete the degree
- Expansion of postgraduate programs is not possible because of staff limitation

- Moderation of question papers and second marking of answer scripts by senior academics within and outside the Department are carried out
- Various forms of informal peer observations are practiced

**Weaknesses:**

- Peer observation with respect to the conducting of lectures by the junior staff is not practiced

#### **4. Skills Development**

**Strengths:**

- Department has made any efforts to impart subject specific skills and transferable skills among the students with the available minimum resources

**Weaknesses:**

- The present arrangement to provide IT and English language skills is inadequate and far from satisfactory
- There is no proper mechanism within the Department to develop the soft skills of undergraduates
- Presentation skills of student need to be developed further

#### **5. Academic Guidance and Counseling:**

**Strengths:**


- All members of the staff are engaged in academic counselling in an informal manner
- Undergraduate students who are engaged in their final year research have adequate access to their academic supervisors and regular consultation takes place
- Lecturer-in-charge is appointed by the Department for each course to facilitate (i) in-course assessments (ii) group discussions and individual counseling (iii) preparation of handouts and recommended readings etc.
- A full time professional Counsellor is available for the university

**Weaknesses:**

- Lack of formal training for staff on the academic guidance and counselling

#### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Preparation of course outlines with learning outcomes for each course
- Introduction of practical training as a part of the curriculum
- Arrangement to provide IT and English language skills within the curriculum
- Increase in the academic cadre is very urgent
- Increase office space for the academic staff
- Provision of internet facility within the Department
- Increase in the weight assigned for continuous assessments in the calculation of total marks



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... should be expanded  
especially multiple copies of Tamil medium textbooks

- Student feedback on each course should be formally obtained
- Close monitoring of the progress of postgraduate students is necessary in order to reduce the time taken to complete the degree.
- More formal peer observation of teaching should be introduced

## **SUBJECT REVIEW VISIT**

### **DAY 1 – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009**

08.30 - 09.00 Private Meeting of Review Panel  
 09.00 ó 09.30 Discuss the Agenda for the Visit  
 09.30 ó 11.00 Meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Acting Dean, Acting Head/Sociology  
 11.00 ó 11.30 Department Presentation on the Self Evaluation Report  
 11.30 ó 12.30 Discussion  
 12.30 ó 13.30 Lunch  
 13.30 ó 14.30 Observing Departmental Facilities  
 14.30 ó 15.30 Observing Other Facilities (Library, Computer Unit)  
 15.30 ó 16.30 Meeting with Department Academic Staff  
 16.30 ó 17.00 Brief Meeting of Reviewers

### **DAY 2 – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

09.00 ó 09.30 Observing Teaching ó Lecture (ASYC 21043)  
 09.30 ó 10.00 Observing Teaching ó Lecture (ASYC 32033)  
 10.00 ó 11.00 Observing Documents  
 11.00 ó 12.00 Meeting with Non-Academic Staff  
 12.00 ó 12.30 Meeting with Postgraduate Students  
 12.30 ó 13.30 Lunch  
 13.30 ó 14.00 Meeting with Student Counselors  
 14.00 ó 14.30 Observing Teaching ó Lecture (ASYC 22013)  
 14.30 ó 15.30 Observing Documents  
 15.30 ó 16.30 Observing Student Presentations  
 16.30 ó 17.00 Meeting of Reviewers

### **DAY 3 – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

09.00 ó 09.30 Meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Former Vice Chancellor and the Acting  
 Dean  
 09.30 ó 10.30 ReviewersøPrivate Discussion  
 10.30 ó 11.30 Meeting with Head and Staff for Reporting  
 11.30 ó 12.30 Lunch



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## **OBSERVED**

- É Minutes of the Department Meetings
- É List of employed graduates holding good positions in the society
- É A set of answer scripts marked by a second examiner
- É Results sheets
- É Student feedback forms
- É Journals published by the Sociology StudentsøSociety
- É Dissertations submitted by BA Special Degree Students
- É Staff Research Publications
- É Teaching material used for different courses
- É Moderated question papers
- É Students field work reports