

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA

26th to 28th February 2007

Review Team :

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1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Subject review evaluates the quality of the student learning experience at program level. This review evaluates the quality of education within the specific discipline of Human Resource Management being offered by the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) of Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya. It focused on the assurance of quality of the programs and student learning experience given by the Department and on its student achievement. The quality of two study programs, i.e., Bachelor of Business Management (Human Resources) Special Degree and Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management being offered by the DHRM was evaluated under the review.

In accordance with the guidelines given in the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities published by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors & Directors and University Grants Commission, July 2002, the DHRM that offers two degrees [also one external degree namely B.B. Mgt (External) General] under the main discipline of Human Resource Management submitted a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The SER consisted of eleven sections, i.e., introduction; aims, learning outcomes and program details; students, staff and facilities; curriculum design, content and review; teaching, learning and assessment methods; the quality of students: student progress and achievement; the extent of student feedback: quantitative and qualitative; postgraduate studies; peer observation; skill development; academic guidance and counseling.

The quality of education within the discipline was evaluated in the light of the aims and learning outcomes given in the SER submitted.

The review focused on the following eight aspects of education:

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

The evaluation of the above eight aspects of education of the DHRM were done by using the information obtained from the following sources:

1. The SER submitted by the DHRM
2. Meeting with the Dean, Head of the Department, academic members, non-academic members, and undergraduate students
3. Observation of teaching
4. Observation of student presentations
5. Observation of samples of the relevant documents (question papers, answer scripts, marks sheets, evaluation sheets etc.)
6. Observation of the DHRM and other facilities (library, computer center, lecture rooms 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 judgments given for all the eight aspects of education.

The dates the Review Team visited were 26th, 27th and 28th February 2007. The agenda of the review visit is annexed.

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

As one of the two great national centres of traditional higher learning and heralding during the first phase of the national movement and national resurgence *Vidyalankara Pirivena* was founded in 1875, and it was transformed to a full-fledged university with the name Vidyalankara University in 1959. Later the university became the Vidyalankara Campus of the University of Ceylon and now it is called University of Kelaniya.

Its vision is “*to be the seat of academic excellence providing Wisdom and Human Values in the South Asian region*”, while its mission is “*to achieve excellence in providing learners with opportunities to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills to serve the world with respect for dignity of life*”.

Currently the university has 6 faculties, i.e. Humanities, Science, Social Sciences, Medicine, Graduate Studies and Commerce & Management Studies.

In 1995, the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies was established to develop graduates with appropriate management knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the demands of job market and for the development of the country as well. Studies in Commerce and Management Studies in the University of Kelaniya goes back to the year 1976 when the Department of Commerce was first established as a sub department under the Department of Economics of the Faculty of Arts. The sub department became a full department under the same Faculty in 1980. After few years, it was shifted from the Faculty of Arts to the Faculty of Social Sciences and subsequently converted to a fully equipped separate faculty in 1995. The Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies consists of four departments, namely Department of Commerce and Financial Management, the Department of Accountancy, the Department of Marketing Management and the DHRM.

The Department under the subject review is the DHRM that was established in 1995 and then its name was the Department of Accountancy & Human Resource Management. It was renamed as Department of Human Resource Management in June 1999 after the Accountancy Unit became a separate department.

The vision of the DHRM is “*to produce the best and the brightest Human Resource professionals out of the Human Resource Management graduates produced by the universities in Sri Lanka and in the South Asian region*”.

The mission of the DHRM is “*to produce Human Resource Management graduates with knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for satisfying the demand of the job market, instilling positive values that will enable the graduates to act as responsible citizens for the development of the country*”.

The number of undergraduate students in each batch of the DHRM is about 90 annually. It was 108 for 2003/2004 batch and it was 110 for 2004/2005 batch. Percentages of the students by ethnic group are as follows: 95% students are Sinhala; 2.5% are Tamil; and 2.5% are Muslim and others. Majority of the students (45%) come from the Western Province. 62% of the students are female students. By religion, majority of the students (81%) are Buddhist.

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Bachelor of Business Management (Human Resource) Special Degree programme is aimed at providing students with an opportunity to pursue a career in the field of Human Resource Management (HRM). It is designed in a way that gives a student a background of knowledge, skills, and attitudes pertaining to the field of HRM. The study programme is designed in line with the mission of the DHRM.

3.1. Aims

In keeping with the vision and the mission of the DHRM, it is expected to provide:

1. a degree programme of high quality and relevance relating to HRM for the students selected for management studies in the University of Kelaniya;
2. challenging and enduring learning opportunities with deliberately designed structure and course units to serve different needs of the students;
3. a conducive and friendly learning environment where the students can develop their employability and the habit of life long learning;
4. a threshold for tri-party involvement namely, academics, students and industry for curriculum development of the HRM degree programme; and
5. support for the development of the staff of the department in their career in providing feedback and peer advice.

3.2. Learning Outcomes

On the successful completion of the degree programme, students are expected to:

1. acquire knowledge and conceptual understanding of the basic functions of the HRM in an organization;
2. develop a range of personal skills and transferable skills (computer literacy, information management, communication, team work etc.) and experience of applying them to varied situations;
3. acquire technical and intellectual skills, leadership skills, critical and analytical skills, adaptation skills, and applying them in resolving of practical problems in the field of HRM;
4. change their attitudes as to be suitable for being effective and ethical human resource managers and make them suitable for the private sector business culture;
5. gain a good exposure to the industry with effective involvement in their activities pertaining to HRM;
6. develop an ability for critical and self-directed learning;

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Strengths

1. The curriculum has been designed to cover a wide range of subjects in the field of HRM and other related fields.

2. Students can select 12 electives out of 20 elective courses during the four year period of study. Hence there is a wider choice available for the students.
3. There is a practice of revising the curriculum. The curriculum is scheduled to be reviewed by the DHRM in every four year period.
4. The curriculum has been designed to have 120 credits. The student has to earn 96 credits of core courses and 24 credits of elective courses.
5. There is an opportunity to obtain a practical training that gives an exposure to the real world of work.
6. There is an opportunity to do a dissertation which is a core course.
7. Nature of the courses is relevant to the field of Business Management specializing in HRM.
8. The programme is conducted in English Medium.
9. There are several courses to improve English and IT competencies of the students.
10. Students' requests and views of the industry were taken into account in designing the curriculum informally.

Weaknesses

1. The number of specialized courses in HRM is not adequate compared with other courses. There are only six courses.
2. There is a repetition or overlapping problem with regard to some courses. BHRM 22063 Introductory HRM and BHRM 32053 Managing HRM; BHRM 31512 Industrial Relation and Collective Bargaining; BHRM 31522 Counselling and Industrial Relations; BHRM 31033 Industrial Psychology for Organizational Behaviour and BHRM 41014 Organizational Behaviour.
3. There is a mismatch between the title of the course and the content of the course with regard to BHRM 11014 Perspectives of Management.
4. Exclusion of important courses namely Health & Safety Administration and Performance Evaluation & Management.
5. As far as the HRM Specialization is concerned, the degree of concentration on HRM could have been increased.

In view of the number of strengths and their impact on the improvement of quality and relevance and weaknesses, judgment of the Review Team on this aspect is SATISFACTORY.

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Strengths

1. Methods of teaching, learning and assessment contribute to achieve the learning outcomes.
2. Application of different teaching methods.
3. Adequate learning environment.
4. Generally, the degree of commitment of the academics is high.

5. Students are facilitated with field visits, guest lectures and training.
6. Use of continuous assessments and unseen examinations are being practiced. Continuous assessments include mid-semester examinations, quizzes, practical tests, role plays and written reports and oral presentations to be done individually and collectively.
7. Interrelationship between students and teachers is good.
8. There are some books (which are supplementary) written by some academics.
9. There is a Journal titled *Kelaniya Journal of Human Resource Management* which is a very good initiative taken by the DHRM. It is published semi-annually.
10. There is a good system of records management developed and maintained by the current Head of the Department.

Weaknesses

1. Non-availability of course manuals prepared by the academics of the DHRM, especially for the foundation courses. However, there is an attempt taken by one academic.
2. Non-availability of textbooks/scholar books/creative literature in the field of HRM.

Judgment is GOOD with regard to this aspect.

4.3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

Strengths

1. The admission to the academic programs of the DHRM is relatively competitive.
2. Based on our limited observation during the review period, the attitudes and behaviour are generally positive.
3. The degree of employability of the graduates is satisfactory. More than 90% of students have found the first job within 12 months. A considerable amount of students had the opportunity of getting jobs in the private sector just after completion of the practical training.
4. Rate of program completion is very high (91%). The number of students not graduated has declined from 14% in 2002/2003 to 9% in 2004/2005.
5. There is an increase trend with regard to English competency and Computer competency of the students.
6. There is an increasing trend with regard to the number of students who passed out with honours level passes. With the beginning up to several years there were no First Classes. There is one in 2005 and there are two in 2006. Second Classes (Upper Division) have increased from 3 (in 1996) to 13 (in 2006). Second classes (Lower Division) have increased from 11 (in 1996) to 23 (in 2006).

Weaknesses

1. The programme had secured the least preference from the students who were selected to the Faculty.

2. There is a decline with regard to the number of Commerce students while there is an increase with regard to the number of Non-Commerce students.

Judgment is GOOD with regard to this aspect.

4.4. The Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative

Strengths

1. Several revisions of the curricula of the degrees offered by the DHRM were done on the special requests of the students.
2. There is a structured questionnaire method of getting students' feedback about the quality of the teaching.
3. The student representatives participate in the Faculty board meetings as a mandatory requirement stated in the University Act No 16 of 1978.
4. There is a practice of Committee system to discuss in detail about students' views.
5. Practice of open door policy that allows students to meet any academic and also the Dean and Heads to discuss their grievances.

Weaknesses

1. There is no formal comprehensive scheme to monitor the quality of the teachers.

Judgment is GOOD with regard to this aspect.

4.5. Postgraduate Studies

There is a Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management (PGHRM). Hardly academics of the Department teach for postgraduate studies in other universities. There is no a Master degree programme in HRM or specializing in HRM being offered by the DHRM. Strengths and weaknesses with regard to the PGHRM are presented below:

Strengths

1. It is a taught programme with a research project/work based project.
2. It is the first programme of its kind in the state university system in Sri Lanka.
3. It has four preparatory courses allowing students without Management background to follow the programme successfully.
4. Nature of HRM courses of the programme is relevant to the field of HRM.

Weaknesses

1. Admission requirements with regard to experience of the participants have not been specified (even in the official documents) implying to accept students with industry experience.
2. Minor employees' dissatisfaction about the overtime payments which may be a future barrier to run the programme smoothly.
3. No proper system of obtaining student feedback and evaluating quality of teaching and other aspects exists.

4. There is no formal comprehensive scheme to monitor the quality of the teachers. This is very important due to the reasons that the DHRM does not have a Professor, an Associate Professor, and an Academic with a PhD. In future, these weaknesses may be dealt through development of academics.
5. Clear student handbook giving all necessary information is not available.

Judgment is SATISFACTORY.

4.6. Peer Observation

There is a strong understanding among the academic members about the importance of peer observation as a powerful tool for improving the quality of teaching. Also it has been observed that the overall attitude of the academics about the peer evaluation is positive. By the time of the subject review, an attempt was made to develop a mechanism for peer observation. With regard to one academic another academic has done the observation and given the feedback. Several academics have tried themselves. However, there is no formal and systematic common mechanism being practiced.

Judgment is SATISFACTORY with regard to this aspect.

4.7. Skills Development

Strengths

1. There is a strategy for skills development as part of the curriculum. Mainly the DHRM has introduced practical training, and continuous assessments for the development of skills relating to the technical aspects of the field of study, i.e. Business Management with HRM specialization.
2. Students have been given the opportunities to learn and practice computer skills and communication skills.
3. Students are given the opportunities to improve their presentation skills, report writing skills and analytical skills.
4. Medium of instruction in English and compulsory course on Business Communication will enhance English skills of the students.
5. There is a practice of organizing a field trip for the final year students at the end of every year enabling students to improve their social skills.
6. The students are given with the reading tasks designed for improving their skills in both reading for knowledge and reading for pleasure.

Weaknesses

1. Non-availability of skills modules for at least very important courses.
2. Practical training is not a compulsory course. Hence, many students may not take the expected training.
3. There is no proper formal evaluation system to measure the student's performance on the practical training.

Judgment is GOOD.

4.8. Academic Guidance and Counselling

Strengths

1. A student counselling programme is available in the university for which four members of the DHRM work as student counsellors.
2. One academic member of the DHRM serves as a Personal Counsellor at the 'Kalana Mithuru Sevana' unit established by the university.
3. Practice of having personal tutors to help solve problems faced by students in their learning process.
4. There is an effective one-month orientation program for fresh students focusing on academic guidance and counselling.
5. There is a detailed handbook of all the degree programs as degree guidance.

Weaknesses

1. Student perception (revealed from a meeting with the students) that there is no close and positive link existing between the Department teachers and the students compared with other departments of the Faculty.
2. Non-availability of records management system for reviewing the practice of student guidance and counselling.

Judgment is GOOD.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The DHRM commenced its study programs in the midst of very limited physical and human resources and was able to make significant progress. Based on the observations made during the visit by the Review Team and discussed above, the eight aspects were judged as follows:

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

The overall judgment is suspended

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following recommendations are given by the review team to further improve the relevance and quality of the programs being offered by the DHRM (these actions may be useful):

1. Increasing the number of specialized courses in HRM so as to make the Degree specializing in HRM is recommended.
2. It is recommended to avoid the repetition or overlapping problem with regard to the courses mentioned under 4.1 of chapter 4. The Review Team is of the view that it is better to introduce one course namely HRM or Introductory HRM. Alternatively, two courses such as HRM 1 and HRM 11 may be good.
3. Introduction of courses on Health & Safety Administration and Performance Evaluation & Management is recommended.
4. It is recommended to rename the course BHRM 11014 to suit the course content. Principles of Management or Fundamentals of Management or Management may be more appropriate.
5. Developing course manuals by the academics of the DHRM (at least for generalized HRM courses such as Introductory HRM, Industrial Relations, Organizational Behaviour etc.) is recommended. If writing is a difficult task for many academics, as a first step, Review Team suggests to compile from suitable sources by adopting and/or adapting with due acknowledgement.
6. Establishment of a Departmental Advisory Committee consisting of relevant eminent professors and senior eminent industry professionals is recommended.
7. It is recommended to develop skills manuals at least for very important specialised courses.
8. The DHRM may consider appointing a suitable permanent academic from the department for English & Business Communication.
9. It is recommended to develop a review system regarding the student preferences (first, second, third and fourth).
10. Introduction of a formal performance evaluation system for teachers for development purposes is recommended.
11. Introduction of a formal system to monitor the students' progress to give feedback regularly (At least annually if semi-annually is not practicable due to resource constraints), is recommended.
12. It is recommended to formulate and implement a formal peer evaluation system. Special attention need to be paid to policy, form and procedure.
13. The Review Team feels that the enhancement of the quality of the PGDHRM is needed by having appropriate eligibility requirements, developing a student manual or handbook giving relevant information about the programme, preparing a handbook giving guidelines for preparation and presentation of the research project/work based project and an appropriate staffing system with regard to resource personnel.
14. The department may consider increasing the duration of the practical training up to six months in future.
15. It is recommended to make the practical training compulsory for each student when the DHRM has a sufficient number of links with the industry.

7. ANNEXES

7.1. AGENDA OF THE SUBJECT REVIEW

Day 1 – 26/02/2007

08.30 - 09.00 a.m.	Welcome meeting with the Director, Dean and Head of Department
09.00 – 09.30 a.m.	Discuss and finalize the Agenda of the Review
09.00 – 09.30 a.m.	Tea Break
09.30 – 10.30 a.m.	Department Presentation on the Self Evaluation Report
10.30 – 12.30 a.m.	Discussion
12.30 – 01.30 p.m.	Lunch Break
01.30 – 02.30 p.m.	Meeting with undergraduate students
02.30 – 03.30 p.m.	Observing Facilities (Library, Computer labs etc.)
03.30 – 04.30 p.m.	Meeting with Department Academic Staff
04.30 – 05.30 p.m.	Brief Meeting of Reviewers

Day 2 – 27/02/2007

09.00 - 10.00 a.m.	Observation of Teaching 1
10.00 – 11.30 a.m.	Observation of Documents (Working Tea)
11.30 – 12.30 a.m.	Meeting with Technical Staff and other Non-Academic Staff
12.30 – 01.30 p.m.	Lunch Break
01.30 – 03.00 p.m.	Observing Teaching 2
03.00 – 04.30 p.m.	Meeting with undergraduates
04.30 – 05.30 p.m.	Brief Meeting of Reviewers

Day 3 – 28/02/2007

09.00 - 09.30 a.m.	Observing student presentations
09.30 – 10.00 a.m.	Observing teaching
10.00 – 10.30 a.m.	Academic Guidance and Counseling Discussion (Working Tea)
10.30 – 11.00 p.m.	Reviewers' Private Discussion
11.00 – 01.00 p.m.	Meeting with Head and Staff for Reporting
01.00 – 02.30 p.m.	Lunch and Report Writing Discussion