

# **SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT**

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS

Visual Arts & Design and  
Performing Arts Unit



***FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA***

18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008

**Review Team :**

Prof. Jayasena Kottegoda, University of Visual and Performing Arts  
Prof. Mudiyanse Dissanayake, University of Visual and Performing Arts  
Prof. Udaya Meddegama, University of Peradeniya  
Dr. (Ms.) Ajantha Hapuarachchi, University of Colombo  
Prof. Chandra Wickramagamage

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## 1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Higher education, a 'public good' is of crucial importance to health, wealth and well being of the society and the economy. Universities must conscientiously exercise their responsibility for quality and standard. University accountability for quality and standards is a key factor in promoting and safeguarding in Sri Lankan higher education.

Subject review evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline. It is focused on the quality of student learning experience and student achievement. Further, it is designed to evaluate the quality of both undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

The main purpose of the subject review is to evaluate the quality of education in a particular subject or discipline. The process of subject review is conducted as stipulated in the Quality Assurance Handbook, to make judgments using specific evidence, focusing on the quality of the student learning experiences and student achievement, according to the aims and objectives, which the Department aspires to achieve. The review attempts to identify good practices, the constraints and the strategies that can be used to overcome the constraints confronted in the learning/teaching process.

The Visual Arts & Design and Performing Arts Unit of Department of Fine Arts has submitted its Self Evaluation Report (SER) to the Quality Assurance Council in 2006 on which the review activity was done.

Quality Assurance Council of the UGC appointed the following Members to perform the Subject Review of the Visual Arts & Design and Performing Arts Unit at the University of Kelaniya.

- Prof. Jayasena Kottegoda
- Prof. Mudiyanse Dissanayake
- Prof. Udaya Meddegama
- Prof. Chandra Wickrama Gamage
- Dr. Ajantha Hapuarachchi,

A Panel of Reviewers appointed by the QAAC reviewed the Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Humanities, University of Kelaniya, 18<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> November 2008.

In the review process attention was focused on the following eight aspects as given in the Quality Assurance Handbook:

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 observation.
7. Skills development, and
8. Academic guidance and counseling.

The evaluation of eight aspects was supplemented by the information gathered at the,

- discussions held with the Vice-Chancellor, the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, the Head of Unit, the academic staff and the undergraduate and the postgraduate students and the non-academic and the support staff

- observation of Unit's facilities (lecture rooms, laboratories, staff rooms, office space , rooms for dancing ,music, singing and other performance etc.) and other facilities
- observation of teaching sessions
- review of documents available at the Unit, such as Corporate plan for 2010, Students hand book, External exams syllabi, examination papers, marking schemes, minutes of the unit's meetings, publications by members of the academic staff, etc.

Each of the eight aspects was judged as good or satisfactory or unsatisfactory paying attention to the strengths, good practices and weaknesses found in each area. Taking into consideration the judgments given to the eight aspects, an overall judgment was given as confidence or limited confidence or no confidence.

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

The University of Kelaniya has its origin in the historic Vidyalkara Pirivena, founded in 1875 as a center of learning for Buddhist monks. It was one of the two great national centers of traditional higher learning, heralding the first phase of the national movement and national resurgence.

With the establishment of modern Universities in Sri Lanka in the 1940s and 1950s, the Vidyalkara Pirivena became the Vidyalkara University in 1959, later the Vidyalkara Campus of the University of Ceylon in 1972 and, ultimately the University of Kelaniya in 1978.

Today, the University of Kelaniya has become one of the major national Universities in Sri Lanka. It has two major campuses in seven locations, six faculties and four institutions. It was one of the first universities to begin teaching science in Sinhala, and also the first to restructure the traditional Arts Faculty into three separate Faculties viz. Humanities, Social Sciences and Commerce and Management. It also has several unique Departments not generally founded in the Sri Lankan University system and some innovations of this university have been adopted subsequently by other Universities. These include the departments of industrial management and microbiology in the faculty of science: departments of linguistics, fine arts, modern languages and Hindi in the faculty of humanities, and mass communication and library and information sciences in the faculty of social sciences.

The Unit runs a very small library containing about 200 books provided by donors and by academics for the use of the members of the academic staff and students of the Unit. It provides a meager supplementary to the services rendered by the Central Library.

The Visual Arts & Design and Performing Arts Unit is an independent unit within the Department of Fine Arts in the Faculty of Humanities.

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

### **3.1. Aims**

The aims of the unit is to impart and disseminate a knowledge of cultural heritage of Sri Lanka and the rest of the world with a view of inspiring the undergraduates while improving

their practical skills in respective disciplines. Furthermore, this Unit aims to promote post-graduate studies and research amongst its staff members and students as well as members of the in general who are interested in fine Arts.

It is also expected to train the students as professionals to suit the prevailing social environment and the demands of the job market of the country.

### 3.2. Learning Outcomes

Gain knowledge and conceptual understanding of areas of performing arts based on programmes that provide initial broad framework followed by progressively increasing depth of study.

Acquire practical, technical and intellectual skills necessary for the performing stage in national and global context.

#### Students, Staff and Facilities

There are 248 students in the Visual & Performing Arts Unit, reading for General and Special degrees. Taking all 03 years into consideration, the number of Special Degree students is 125. Table 01 gives the breakdown of students.

#### **Staff of the Visual & Performing Arts stream**

<b>Name &amp; Year of Appointment</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Interests</b>
Mangalika Jayatunge: 11 04.1978	Unit Head, Senior Lecturer 1	B.A. (Hons.) University of Ceylon	Contemporary Art, Rituals and Drama
Dr. B.D. Nandadeva 11.04.1978.	Senior Lecturer 1	B.A. (Hons.) University of Ceylon, MSc. Moratuwa, PhD Delaware	Art History, Conservation Technique
Lanka de Silva 11.03.1997	Snr. Lecturer 11	B.A. (University of Kelaniya) M.A. (Moratuwa)	Garden Design, Colonial Architecture.
Prashanti Narangoda 11.03.1997	Snr. Lecturer	B.A. (Hns.) M.Sc. (Moratuwa)	Folk Theatre, Mahayana Sculpture

#### **Current Status of Staff**

Mangalika Jayatunge	Senior Lecturer and Unit Head
Dr. B.D. Nandadeva	on sabbatical leave
Pro. Kayoko Kusumoto	Visiting Professor
Lanka de Silva	Senior Lecturer
Prashanti Narangoda	Senior Lecturer
Ishani Ranganath	Temporary Lecturer
S. Priyadharsana	Temporary Lecturer
Ruwin Dias	Temporary Lecturer
Vajira Jayatilake	Junior Fellow
Nelika Kariyawasam	Junior Fellow
R. Ratnasiri	Junior Fellow
H. Deshapriya	Junior Fellow
N. Dewasinghe	Junior Fellow

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

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

#### **Strengths:**

Performing Arts unit conducts 17 course units in visual arts. These courses are on the history and evolution of the Sri Lankan Dance, Indian dance, Music and Theatre. Further there are course units on both classical and modern aspects of dance, drama and music. Practical classes are held to complement most of the theory classes. Practical sessions in music, drumming and dancing are well organized and eagerly attended by the students. The following extracts from the self evaluation report will show the nature of the curriculum design of some of these courses, both theory and practical: [self evaluation report pp. 6-11 In this report, as seen in the extracts, the course descriptions are not adequate. The curriculum is designed to allocate 50% of the time for theory and 50% for practical.

#### **Weaknesses and recommendations:**

The review team observed that the course descriptions are inadequate and not clear enough. The reading lists or recommended readings are not up to date, as many new publications on these subjects are not included. We recommend that the syllabi should be updated under guidance of senior academics, avoiding overlapping with the courses taught at the Drama and Theatre and Image Arts unit and the reading lists revised and updated regularly according to the standard system approved by the faculty.

Visual Arts and Design section offers 16 course units. In this stream also the courses share the available time in a semester as 50% for theory and 50% for practical. Further the courses are divided as Core and Elective. Elective courses are optional and the marks students earn are not counted. These courses cover the history of painting and art of the classical period, Art and Architecture, Sri Lankan Arts of the 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Western Arts and Graphic Design. There is one course on the Far Eastern Arts. The annual exhibition of paintings was referred to by the staff as a highlight of their achievements. The special courses offered by this section are popular with students but only a small number of students enroll for the general degree courses.

#### **Weaknesses and Recommendations:**

Lack of sufficient space, classrooms, practice rooms etc. is a major hindrance to the proper function of the unit. More attention should be paid for developing the graphic and design courses as they are very useful practical subjects, which will help graduates in finding employment.

***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**

#### **Strengths:**

From what the review team observed, theory classes seemed to be conducted along the established or standard methods. Some teachers make use of new technology such as the power point and multimedia facilities. Slides and sound effects are also used in lectures when necessary. Some lecturers follow traditional methods in teaching, using the white board and handouts. In the meantime teachers complained about some students being less corporative and less interactive in their lectures.

The practical sessions and classes are different from theory classes. Practical classes in dancing, drumming and music are conducted with the full attention and active and lively participation of students. However, instructors are mostly temporary or visiting. They seemed to be enjoying conducting the practical work. Although the instructors have to manage with limited resources, equipment and instruments they were doing a satisfactory job.

For each course unit the average is given as 50% or 60%, and the exams in theory are marked out of a total of 100. Some of the question papers are of 3 hour duration, whereas in the course unit system in our universities today, the written exams are of 2 hour duration and marks are given out of 60, the remaining 40 set aside for assignments. But this practice is not followed in this unit, probably due to the nature of their curriculum, as considerable emphasis is placed on practical training.

**Weaknesses and Recommendations:**

It would be better if the unit adopted a system of assessment following the accepted norms in the course unit system and considered of introducing continuous assessment. The review team experienced some difficulty in understanding the assessment system followed by the unit. It would be better if the nature of the assignments adopted in relation to each course is clearly indicated.

***Considering the above facts, the aspect of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods is judged as SATISFACTORY***

**4.3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievements**

**Strengths:**

The review team found the quality of students to be of good standard. They are genuinely motivated and devoted to learning. However, according to some teachers attendance in lectures by some students is not satisfactory. From the exam mark sheets, what the review team noted was high marks most students had earned. A large number of students had secured first classes.

In the practical classes, despite the limitations in space and equipment, both the staff and students were managing well. The team observed practical sessions in dancing and drumming and appreciated the commitment of the instructors and the skills demonstrated by the students. The team further observed practical classes in Indian music, Sri Lankan folk music and folk dancing as well, which too were of commendable standards. In all these subjects students seemed to be making good progress achieving expected levels. However, the team could not, due to limitation of time, observe theory classes in western music or dance. Both students and instructors suffer due to lack of a proper practice room and a sufficient number of good drums in the drumming class.

According to the records maintained at the Unit, failure rate in these subjects was only .01%

**Weaknesses and Recommendations:**

This unit needs a proper, modern theatre and practice rooms for rehearsals and practical training. More financial support should be given to procure the essential material such as skins for the drums and for repairing of other instruments. Further, drums, Tablas and other instruments should be provided in sufficient numbers for the students taking the courses offered by this unit.

***Based on the above facts, the aspect of the Quality of Students, Student Progress and Achievements could be judged as GOOD***

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

##### **Strengths**

There is no established system for checking and receiving student feedback. In the Self evaluation Report, the unit admits that it has not yet implemented any form of student feedback. However, the staff gets some feedback from students as 50% Of the teaching is done through practical classes. In practical sessions the lecturers are often in close contact with students and they work in very familiar and friendly atmosphere. So, as the teacher-student interaction is taking place automatically, an artificial method of gathering student feedback has not been considered as necessary.

##### **Weaknesses and Recommendations:**

Although there is close contact with students, it would be better to start implementing an accepted method of getting student feedback, especially in theory lectures. This will help the unit to improve quality of teaching and other academic activities in the unit.

***Based on the above facts, the aspect of the extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative could be judged as SATISFACTORY***

#### **4.5. Postgraduate Studies**

##### **Strengths:**

The team observed very little activities in this area. This unit does not seem to be still ready or able to conduct post graduate studies. There is provision for offering M. Phil degrees, but during its long history of over 30 years, the unit has given only 8 M. Phil degrees.

##### **Weaknesses and Recommendations:**

This aspect, i.e. post-graduate studies should be developed, perhaps by sending lecturers abroad to secure post-graduate degrees from recognized foreign universities and encouraging its junior staff to obtain higher degrees locally or internationally and to prepare advanced, modern curriculum for Master's and doctoral Degrees. Conducting post-graduate lectures mostly by visiting faculty is not very satisfactory.

***Based on the above facts, the aspect of the Postgraduate Studies could be judged as SATISFACTORY***

#### **4.6. Peer Observation**

##### **Strengths:**

The Unit admits the fact that it has not yet implemented peer observation. Only through constant meetings at the unit the senior teachers advise and guide the juniors.

##### **Weaknesses and Recommendations:**

It is highly recommended that the unit starts peer observation for enhancing the quality of teaching.



***Based on above facts, the aspect of the Peer Observation could be judged as UNSATISFACTORY***

#### **4.7. Skills Development**

**Strengths:**

This Unit considers all its practical classes as related to skills development. This is true as far as the subjects offered are concerned. The students taking these courses will develop skills in painting, sculpture, dancing, music and design. Students taking graphic designing will no doubt gain skills that are much in demand in the job market.

**Weaknesses and Recommendations:**

The team noted in dancing, drumming and folk music the level could be more improved to suit expectations in university education. Learning just to dance some *vattam*, *vannam* and practising to play the common and popular drum beats or learning to sing folk songs, which can be seen at school level also would not be sufficient at this level. Hence the Unit could re-think about the quality of some of these courses and practical sessions and revise them.

Students should be encouraged to gain computer skills and knowledge of one or two foreign languages. These skills will be needed to compete in the job market as well as for obtaining scholarships.

***Based on above facts, the aspect of the Skills development could be judged as GOOD***

#### **4.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling**

**Strengths:**

Senior staff members offer adequate guidance to students and junior staff members. Junior members are involved in guiding students in various subject-related activities. As observed earlier, in the field of Post-graduate studies, very little guidance is given.

**Weaknesses and Recommendations:**

As some of the junior lecturers in this unit already possess higher degrees earned in India, mostly Masters' degrees, they should be given opportunity to further their education leading to Ph.D. As the review team noticed, the present number of permanent staff is not sufficient to implement the academic program of the Unit and for the smooth functioning of its various activities. The 'junior fellows' carry a considerable share of the workload, but as their tenure is a brief one they would not be able to gain much needed postgraduate qualifications and therefore we recommend that the university should think more favorably about the future of these talented young scholars.

The team could not find much evidence about the involvement of the staff in this unit in counseling or student welfare activities.

Level of Judgment: Satisfactory

### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

This is a very active and vibrant academic unit which deserves more fair treatment by the university. This Unit can be developed into a fully fledged department as the present status of a 'unit' poses many problems for the academic staff to develop their talents as well as to engage in research. The review team noted with dismay how the Head of the unit was

managing without any support staff. There is no clerk or office assistance. The university has assigned a laborer only for half a day. This is not a very satisfactory arrangement. When there are some practical problems like these it will be almost impossible to pay full attention to teaching or research. Considering the volume of teaching related work, number of students and the variety and number of the practical classes, the existing shortages of class rooms, studios and shortages of instruments and equipment should be addressed immediately. As all the teachers pointed out, the Unit urgently needs a few soundproof lecture halls and practice rooms. The present location of the unit is ideal and spacious enough for developing these facilities.

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

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