SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA

28th to 30th June 2006

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1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

The primary objective of the 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 mechanisms. 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 programme:
- Institutional Review
- Subject Review
- Subject Benchmarking and
- Credit and Qualification Framework

Being a key component in the national quality assurance system for Sri Lanka, the 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 programmes.

The 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 classes, 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 programmes are judged. There are three options open to the review team in making the overall judgement concerning the quality of provision in the department of study concerned:

- Confidence
- Limited Confidence
- No Confidence

In all cases, the overall judgement will be supported by the evidence contained in the report.

In addition to the overall judgement, review teams will provide a separate judgement of each subject review aspect. The review team will summarize its findings on each aspect, emphasizing strengths, good practices and weaknesses. At the end of each aspect, they will use one of three judgements:

- Good
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory

In judgements of 'good' or 'satisfactory', the review team will wish to highlight strengths and good practice relating to the aspect concerned; in the 'unsatisfactory' category there are likely to be fewer examples of strengths or good practice.

The key elements of the process followed by the Review Team in conducting this subject review and shared with the two departments included an emphasis on the voluntary nature of this exercise as well as the fact that it is undertaken by peers. While the assessment is broadly based on the self-evaluation of the respective academic departments, the success of the review depends on the findings and process being validated and owned by the members of these departments. Hence, a detailed debriefing and feedback session was held at the end of the two-and-a-half day review, where doubts were clarified and the preliminary findings were shared and informally validated.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA, THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AND ELTU

The University of Kelaniya originated as the Vidyalankara University of Ceylon which was established as an independent university in 1959, by granting university status to a traditional seat of learning, namely the Vidyalakara Pirivena founded in 1875 as a centre of learning for Buddhist monks. It was one of the two great national centres of traditional higher learning, heralding the first phase of the national movement and national resurgence. The status of the Vidyalankara University was changed to that of a campus in 1972 under the University of Ceylon Act, No. 1 of 1972 which created a single national university. With the implementation of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978, the Vidyalankara Campus became an autonomous university under the name and style, University of Kelaniya.

Today, the University of Kelaniya is one of the major national universities. It is located just outside the municipal limits of Colombo, in the ancient and historic city of Kelaniya, on the north bank of the Kelani river.

The University consists of six faculties and three institutions. The six faculties are the following:
Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies
Faculty of Humanities
Faculty of Medicine
Faculty of Science
Faculty of Social Sciences and
Faculty of Graduate Studies

Two postgraduate institutes, namely, the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, and an Institute dealing with indigenous medicine, i.e. the Gampaha Wickremarachchi Ayurveda Institute, are affiliated to the University of Kelaniya.

The University of Kelaniya has pioneered a number of new developments in higher education in the country. It was one of the first universities to begin teaching science in Sinhala, and also first to restructure the traditional Arts faculty into three separate faculties of Humanities, Social Sciences and Commerce and Management. It also has several unique Departments not generally found in the Sri Lankan university system. 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; Mass Communication and Library & Information Sciences in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The undergraduate enrolment in the different subject streams in 2005 is given below:

Subject Stream	Number of Students
Arts	3,449
Management Studies and Commerce	2,129
Science	1,195
Medical Sciences	971
IT	181
Total	7,925

Source: www.ugc.ac.lk

English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU)
The vision of the ELTU is to become an academic department within the Faculty of Humanities by 2020 the latest. The mission of the ELTU is to ensure every undergraduate at the University of Kelaniya has the opportunity to become competent in English for academic and professional purposes. Yet, it is recognized that this is an uphill task at the University of Kelaniya because English is not a compulsory subject.

The English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) functions under the Faculty of Humanities, but conducts courses for all the faculties of the University of Kelaniya. In terms of status, it is not an academic department, and does not conduct degree level courses, but teaches a course required for the degree for students in the Commerce & Management Faculty.

In 1981, the English Language Teaching Unit was declared a unit in its own right, and moved out of the Department of English. The evolution of the ELTU has the makings of a success story. It began as the sub-department of English, and functioned under the Head, Department of English. Even in its sub-department days, it had its own identity, mainly through the personality of the head: Kamal de Abrew, A.M.G. Sirimanne, Doric de Souza. The ELTU, University of Kelaniya has always been headed by a member of the academic staff. Since its inception, Prof. D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke, Ms. Mirelle Jayewardena, Rev. Sutadhara, Dr. D.B. Nandadeva and Dr Manique Gunesekera have served as Head, ELTU.

ELTU Staff & Students
- ELTU teaching staff fall into the following categories:
  − Permanent   07
  − Visiting   10
  − Temporary   04
  − Contract   08 – 12

- ELTU Office Staff:
  − Clerk   01
  − Office Aide   01
  − Project Clerk for fee-levying courses   01

ELTU Students
- Over 2000 students follow ELTU courses. Registered student numbers for 2004/5 Academic Year:
  − Humanities & Social Science   643
  − Commerce & Management   1327
  − Science   165

[Excluding Medical Faculty, English for Biology, & English Skills for Final Years]

ELTU Courses are classified into eight different types, based on their relationship to the undergraduate core curriculum, as follows:
1. Auxiliary Courses
2. Certificate Courses
3. Mandatory Courses
4. Elective Courses
5. ESP Courses
6. Sponsored Courses
7. Fee-levying Courses
8. Staff Development Courses

Of these, all except the fee-levying and staff development courses are exclusively for undergraduates of the University of Kelaniya.

Department of English (ENGL)
The mission of the department is to teach English language and literature to the undergraduates so that they enhance their knowledge of English, familiarize themselves with the genres and giants of literature, and become adept at using English to their advantage. Another aspect is to teach students professional skills such as presentation skills, report writing, and accurate writing, so that they are ready to work in an English using environment.

Department of English staff
- Cadre Positions   [05 permanent academic positions]
  - Chair   01 (Vacant)[1]
  - Lecturers   03 (Two on study leave)
  - Probationary   01 (On study leave)
  - Temporary Lecturer   01
  - Clerk   Not Appointed
  - Office Aide   Not Appointed

Department of English Courses
- General Degree   188 students (including first year)[2]
- Special Degree   20 students
- Postgraduate Degrees (No taught courses)
  - M.A., M.Phil, PhD by research   Not Available
  - Department of English PhDs   02 completed

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Self-Assessment document identifies the aims of the ELTU as "teach[ing] English skills to the students to aid them in doing reference at the library, listening comprehension, reading internet sources, formulating academic answers, and learning to write accurately." In addition, an aim is "to teach professional skills such as presentation skills, report writing, and rules of grammar and usage, so that they are ready to work un an English using environment."

These aims are very broad and over-arching as befits a programme of this nature. It is important, therefore, to assess the extent to which these aims are reflected in the learning outcomes of the specific courses offered by the ELTU. As outlined above, the following categories or types of courses are offered:
  1. Auxiliary Courses
  2. Certificate Courses

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[1] Though this position was vacant at the time of the Review, the current Head has subsequently been selected to the Chair.
[2] 90% of students in the Department of English are female. All data for this section a=have been taken from the Self-Evaluation Reports and information provided to the Review Team.

3. Mandatory Course
4. Elective Courses
5. ESP Courses
6. Sponsored Courses
7. Fee-levying Courses
8. Staff Development Courses

In order to assess the consistency and coherence of the learning objectives within and across these courses it is necessary to consider each of them separately.

Auxiliary Courses:
Five Auxiliary Courses are offered, so-called because they are for credit and appear on student transcripts. These are:
a) English for Communication ELTU 13012
b) English in Today's World ELTU 21012
c) Introduction to Literature ELTU 22022
d) English for Professional Purposes ELTU 33012
e) Executive Skills ELTU 43012

The self-assessment identifies the learning outcomes of the first three courses as "to familiarize the students with English for Academic Purposes." Though this appears to be more of an objective than an outcome, it appeared, from a preliminary examination of lesson material and interviews with students, that the achievement of the outcome has not been sufficiently monitored. The learning outcome of the last two courses is stated as "to prepare the students for the challenges of the workplace." This objective appears to have been met through the focus and material of the courses, and student feedback reinforced this assessment.

Certificate Courses:
The Certificate in English is a course conducted by the ELTU in keeping with the Humanities Faculty's guide-lines for certificate courses. The learning outcome is to "enhance communication skills of undergraduates." In addition, two other certificate courses – English in Today's World and English for Professionals – are offered. While the distinction from similar Auxiliary Courses remain unclear, the difference in learning outcomes is difficult to explain.

Mandatory Courses:
Only one course – English for Business Communication – comes under this category. The learning outcome, "to provide assistance to the students in using English for their degree courses" appears to have been partially met through this course. Moreover, being the only compulsory course taught by the ELTU, it marks an important beginning point which the review team and the ELTU staff felt needed to be taken on by other faculties and departments. It is paradoxical that the Humanities Faculty, which contains the ELTU, has no mandatory courses in English, though all those we interviewed agreed that this was an urgent need.

Elective Courses:
This includes some courses offered through specific departments, such as the English Reading Skills (FNRT 22893) course conducted on behalf of the Fine Arts Department, but it was not

possible to assess this course due to time and other constraints. In general, however, greater uniformity and coordination across courses such this is necessary in order to ensure consistency and to maintain a common standard.

ESP Courses:
For over 10 years the ELTU has conducted an Intensive Course in English for the Faculty of Medicine of the university. This English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course has a well-developed set of teaching materials and is closely monitored by academic staff of the Medical Faculty. A Needs Assessment is also conducted and the course revised accordingly. The learning outcome of the course titled English for Medical Students is "to prepare them to follow lectures in the English medium." This objective is successfully met by this course. A course of more recent origin, English for Biology seeks to "develop their English skills for academic purposes."

Sponsored Courses:
"The English for Final Years' course is sponsored by the World Bank IRQUE project, and has been conducted twice." This course appears to be very successful, judging from student evaluations and materials used, and the learning outcome "to equip students with skills for employment" has been achieved. The DETE (Diploma in English for Teachers of English) course, designed to enhance the English language skills and teaching competencies of government English teachers could not be assessed.

Fee-Levying Courses:
The weekend English course, conducted as "a community service done by the ELTU", has as its learning outcome "to teach English for Professional Purposes." The review team was unable to ascertain the extent to which this outcome was met.

Staff Development Courses:
Preparation for TOEFL and other staff development programmes in the faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences have been conducted. In 2006 a Staff Development module on teaching methodology was taught by the ELTU. The stated learning outcome of these staff development courses is the same "English for Professional Purposes," though the team was unable to follow up these courses.

English Department (ENGL):
The stated aims of the department "are to teach English language and literature to the undergraduates so that they enhance their knowledge of English, familiarize themselves with the genres and giants of literature, and become adept at using English to their advantage. Another aim is to teach students professional skills such as presentation skills, report writing, and writing accurately, so that they are ready to work in an English using environment."

Specific learning outcomes have been provided for 12 courses conducted under the General Degree programme, all of which are core courses. The course syllabi and examination system are entirely consonant with the respective learning outcomes and expected levels of achievement. However, all of the courses do not appear to be of equivalent difficulty or depth. General Degree students study 02 composition/grammar courses, 02 Linguistics courses, 06 Literature courses, and 01 course each in Literary Theory and Presentation Skills. The Literature courses are a mix

of period, genre and location-specific courses. Notable is the course on Sri Lankan Writers. The Self-Evaluation identifies average grades scored by students in each of these courses, which is around 40% – 50%, with the exception of the Presentation Skills course (60%).

The 17 courses taught in the Special Degree programme in English have not been described individually. It was, therefore, not possible to assess the extent of achievement of learning outcomes of these courses. However, on the basis of the syllabi and examination papers provided, the review team was able to evaluate that these two components are synchronized and consistent. The level of performance expected and the standard of grading were both satisfactory.

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

In general, the Review Team found that the English Department (ENGL) was severely understaffed and it was therefore unreasonable to expect many of even the most basic quality requirements with only one lecturer. This brings up the issue of the granting of study leave to senior staff when there is no one to conduct the basic teaching load of the Department.

While the ELTU has both lecturing and academic support staff on its cadre, it appears to rely on visiting staff for many of its courses, many of whom are post-retirement. The hourly payment system for visiting staff does not lend itself to systematic planning briefing meetings, nor does it encourage continuity and collective commitment to the overall aims and objectives of the ELTU.

The following detailed specific findings should be seen in the context of these two general observations regarding staffing of the ENGL and ELTU, which have been taken into consideration in making the final assessments in each of the eight areas of evaluation. The findings and judgements are presented separately for the ELTU and ENGL, but where appropriate a set of general comments lead off the section.

4.1.   Curriculum Design, Content and Review

A detailed analysis of all available material was undertaken by the review team during the three days on campus. In addition, further information was obtained from the staff through email and direct contact. Based on the systematic assessment of materials and discussions with staff, the following conclusions were arrived at, which were shared and validated at the debriefing.

● ELTU:

   Strengths:
   o   Team Design, Core Materials selected by Coordinator + others designated by him/her
   o   Variety of Courses, for all except lowest competency level, including exposure to literature
   o   Continuous Assessment built-in (up to 40%), and most test all four skills

Weaknesses:
- o Does not seem to address needs of lowest competency level (estimated at 30% of population)
- o Possible areas of duplication, may need better sequencing

Structural/Systemic Issues:
- o Mandatory courses carry no credit and attendance not compulsory. Optional courses counted towards GPA may deter students. Social Science and Humanities Faculties have no English Requirement.
- o Ad hoc courses need streamlining. Faculty and Department requirements are often taught in isolation, and hence not integrated into ELTU curriculum, posing issues of standards, monitoring and outcomes.

It is the view of the Review Team that the Curriculum Design, Content and Review in the ELTU can be judged as <u>Satisfactory</u>.

- ● ENGL:

  Strengths:
  - o Wide range of course covering Language & Literature
  - o Continuous Assessment built-in (up to 40%), and many involve group assignments

  Weaknesses:
  - o Serious shortage of academic staff has led to restriction of course choices
  - o Lack of variety in teaching
  - o Delays in feedback to students
  - o Fewer opportunities for revision
  - o The over-reliance on one person

  Systemic Issues:
  - o Inconsistency between Contact Hours and Credits assigned to courses. Some courses are too heavy for the semester system

It is the view of the Review Team that the Curriculum Design, Content and Review in the English Department can be judged as <u>Good</u>.

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

General Observations on Assessment
The assessment schemes set out do not always match the course objectives.
- ● ELTU:
  General:
  - o The ELTU staff comprise committed professional teachers
  - o There is a need for more structured briefing/guidance, training and peer review of newer staff.

Assessment Methods:
- o Schemes of assessment do not always appear to match course objectives
- o Records of tests/assessments should be readily accessible to staff in Department

It is the view of the Review Team that the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods in the ELTU can be judged as <u>Satisfactory</u>.

- ENGL:
  General
  - o The Department maintains a friendly and supportive environment for students
  - o It is evident that the Department suffers from inadequate resources and facilities. There is no clerical or office support staff, which means that the ELTU staff have to assist with ENGL work.

  Assessment Methods:
  - o Innovative assessment methods have been used for continuous assessment
  - o Poster presentations, group presentations – Dramatizations of texts

It is the view of the Review Team that the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods in the English Department can be judged as <u>Satisfactory</u>.

4.3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievements

- ELTU:
  - o Better students benefit from and enjoy courses
  - o Widely divergent competence levels and expectations
  - o Weakest students may be excluded due to fear and lack of awareness of ELTU programs
  - o Contradictions and lack of consistency in course requirements confuse students

It is the view of the Review Team that the Quality of Students, including progress and achievements, in the ELTU can be judged as <u>Satisfactory</u>.

- ENGL:
  - o Overall student satisfaction
  - o Engaged in creative and collegial activities
  - o Widely divergent expectations and competencies, which may affect the overall quality of the programme
  - o English one of the many concurrent learning activities undertaken by students

ENGL: Students
- o Approximately 200 students in 2006.
- o Student population has tripled in last 25 years, but cadre positions the same, exacerbated by study leave.
- o Increase in numbers shows demand for English.

o   Standard of English extremely low: External Examiners express shock at errors in written work.

ENGL: Student Profile
  o   Suburban residence
  o   Urban schooling
  o   Female (90%)
  o   Mainly from Gampaha, Kurunegala, Kandy districts
  o   Also studying diverse languages such as French, Japanese, German
  o   Skills-oriented
  o   Multidisciplinary qualifications outside university: Law, CIM, CIMA, French, German
  o   Receptive to new ideas

ENGL: Student Aspirations (based on a questionnaire administered by the Department)
  o   40% want to do postgraduate degrees.
  o   30% want to go overseas.
  o   10% want to teach.
  o   10% want to join the diplomatic service.
  o   10% want to work for the media.
  o   The majority wants to work in the private sector.
  o   The majority believes the private sector will give a better deal.

It is the view of the Review Team that the Quality of Students, including progress and achievements, in the English Department can be judged as <u>Satisfactory</u>.

4.4.   Extent and Use of Student Feedback

● ELTU:

Even though ELTU has been administering student evaluation forms for its courses for a long period of time, it has not been done for all the course units in every semester. In other words student feedback mechanism has not been formalized in ELTU yet.

In discussions with staff and students, however, it became evident that more ad hoc processes of obtaining feedback, such as informal discussions, were carried out by individual teachers. Staff research has also resulted in administering some survey questionnaires and needs assessments, but it is still not clear how this ad hoc feedback influences changes in course content and logistics, teacher evaluation and student assessment methods. In general, there appears to be a growing sensitivity to student needs and requirements, which has not yet been translated into a systematic procedure.

It is the view of the Review Team that the Extent and Use of Student Feedback in the ELTU can be judged as <u>Unsatisfactory</u>.

● ENGL:
Relatively small classes and a very open atmosphere characterize the student-teacher interaction in the English Department, but no systematic attempt has been made to solicit student feedback.

The standard end-semester student evaluation forms have not been administered so far in the English Department, though there is consensus that this practice should be implemented with effect from the current semester.

However, recent changes in curriculum and emphasis appear to reflect a response to the feedback received from students. The best example of this would be the introduction of a course on Presentation Skills to special degree students, who expressed great satisfaction with this change. Students repeatedly informed the review team that many opportunities were provided for verbal feedback, which though not formalized, appeared to be sensitive to student needs.

It is the view of the Review Team that the Extent and Use of Student Feedback in the English Department can be judged as Satisfactory.

4.5. Postgraduate Studies

● ELTU:
The ELTU has a few staff members who are engaged in postgraduate research, but there seems to little coordination or dissemination of this work. Participation in local workshops and conferences is encouraged, but no postgraduate programmes have been set up in the ELTU. No ELTU staff are involved in postgraduate studies within the university either. Faculty research is still in its early stages, though some of these projects promise to be of interest and applicability to the work of the ELTU. Staff have read research papers at conferences such as biennial SLELTA conference and the Graduate Research Symposium. However, since the ELTU has only a very limited number of staff members with research-oriented postgraduate qualifications and since they too are stretched to the extreme in the undergraduate programme, the decision not to conduct postgraduate courses has been viewed by the Review Team as a very responsible decision that deserves to be endorsed.

It is the view of the Review Team that Postgraduate Studies in the ELTU can be judged as Satisfactory.

● ENGL:
Given the fact that the English Department has functioned for the past few years with only one permanent non-probationary academic staff member, no extensive postgraduate work can be expected from it. At present two staff members who have been on extended study leave are working on their PhDs. Once they return at the end of 2006, this situation will change for the better. Academic staff have presented their research at national and international conferences. In view of the absence of staff and the other resource constraints in the ENGL, it is clearly the right decision not to embark on a postgraduate programme in the present context.

It is the view of the Review Team that Postgraduate Studies in the English Department can be judged as Satisfactory.

4.6.   Peer Observation

Peer observation does not appear to be a structured and systematic activity in either the ELTU or the ENGL. However, given that the ENGL had only one confirmed academic staff member working at the time of the Review, this is a difficult proposition to implement. In contrast, in the ELTU there is a critical mass of teaching staff to implement peer observation processes, particularly with new staff. Though ad hoc and informal peer observations have taken place in both the ELTU and ENGL, no documentation of this has been maintained. As a result, particularly in the ELTU, individual teachers of common courses do not have sufficient structured sharing of methodologies and strategies. This is accentuated by the fact that regular staff briefings or collective lesson planning does not seem to take place.

In fairness to both the ELTU and ENGL, however, it should be noted that the absence of peer reviewing processes is a faculty and university-wide phenomenon, and this lacuna should be addressed as a matter of policy at the faculty and university levels if it is to be effective and systematic.

It is the view of the Review Team that Peer Observation in the ELTU can be judged as <u>*Unsatisfactory*</u>*.*

It is the view of the Review Team that Peer Observation in the English Department can be judged as <u>*Unsatisfactory*</u>*.*

4.7.   Skills Development
The assessment of the Skills Development component of the Subject Review was undertaken on the basis of interviews with staff and students, and the analysis of syllabi and course content (as available).

- ELTU:
  The following is a summary of the observations made by the Review Team.
  The review found that
  o   Skills for Employment were provided to students, particularly in the final year course.
  o   English Skills are also taught to Final Years
  o   The final year course is endorsed by the Private Sector, with a blue chip company undertaking to teach sections of the course that relate to corporate values
  o   The skills development programme targets Soft and Social Skills
  o   Those who complete it are happy with course
  o   Flexible schedules have been introduced to enable students with different schedules to participate in the course.
  o   Despite all this flexibility, however, only 47% attendance was recorded, and the drop out rate was high.
  o   This was more a result of the course being conducted at the end of the students' tenure at the university than of any internal problem. It is, therefore, necessary to integrate this course into the undergraduate curriculum of the two faculties, Humanities and Social Sciences.

- Practical Skills inculcated include,
  - o Presentation Skills
  - o Correspondence Skills
  - o Spoken Interaction Skills in Diverse Situations, and
  - o Employment Preparation Skills

It is the view of the Review Team that Skills Development component in the ELTU can be judged as <u>Satisfactory</u>.

- ENGL:
  The following is a summary of the skills introduced by the English Department.
  - o Literary Skills (These skills include Appreciation, Criticism, Sensitivity, Creativity
  - o Presentation Skills, which include skills in the areas: Academic Presentations; Explicatory Skills; Emphasis on Clarity, Confidence and Organization
  - o Analytical Skills, which include skills in the areas: Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection; Synthesis and Summary Skills; Research Skills

It is the view of the Review Team that Skills Development component in the English Department can be judged as <u>Satisfactory</u>.

4.8. Academic Guidance and Counselling

In general, the university counseling system did not appear to have the reach or depth to address student needs in a proactive and preventive way, but was mainly geared to crisis management and basic awareness courses. The Orientation Programme at the beginning of the students' undergraduate career was the only occasion when information was provided to them about courses offered and benefits etc., but this too was perceived as inadequate and not always well-timed.

- ELTU:
The ELTU did not appear to have a specific programme for guiding and counseling students, especially those with special needs and weak language skills. This, coupled with the absence of any compulsory courses, has led to the relative neglect of these students, with an estimated 35% of students in the Humanities Faculty never taking any English course during their tenure in the university. While individual teachers were responsive to their students' needs and concerns, in general, the wider student body remained outside the influence and assistance of the ELTU staff. With the exception of those final year students who benefited from the special IRQUE course and the students attending the compulsory courses (Management, Biology), there appears to be a need to enhance the ELTU's rapport with students whose competence in English is very weak and who may legitimately feel that there is no course that specifically targets them.

It is the view of the Review Team that Academic Guidance and Counselling in the ELTU can be judged as <u>Unsatisfactory</u>.

- ENGL:

The ENGL did not have any systematic programme of academic guidance and counseling. Yet, all the students consulted expressed the consensual view that their needs were well-addressed and they were able to approach any staff member if they had a problem. The special degree programme was well-served as there are under 25 students in all three years, but even general degree students felt that the department provided a safe and comfortable space for students. In addition, students who had personal issues were able to seek advice and guidance from staff.

It is the view of the Review Team that Peer Observation in the English Department can be judged as <u>Satisfactory</u>.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the observations made during the visit by the review team, the eight aspects were judged as follows:

ASPECT	JUDGEMENT	
	ELTU	**ENGL**
Curriculum Design, Content and Review	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Postgraduate Studies	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Peer Observation	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Skills Development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Academic Guidance and Counseling	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

- ELTU:

The ELTU has achieved successful outcomes in many areas, despite being handicapped by not having departmental status, and having to depend on visiting staff. Many junior academic staff members are on overseas study leave. Steps need to be taken to access and serve the large proportion of students with minimal English competence, to ensure uniformity across courses, and to regularize student evaluation, peer observation and staff development processes. At the faculty and university level, making at least the lowest rung English course compulsory and upgrading the Unit into a Department will prove crucial in ensuring greater acceptance and credibility among students.

The overall judgement is suspended.

- ENGL:

The English Department (ENGL) remains severely understaffed and under-resourced, to the point of relying almost exclusively on the Head of Department to administer, teach and advocate for the department. All the problems of the ENGL are clearly related to this untenable situation. The expected return of two senior staff members later this year may alleviate the problem, but an increased cadre provision is necessary to sustain a critical mass. For instance, the other comparable ENGLs in Peradeniya and Colombo have 10 and 07 respectively. The Department of English has a total of just under 200 students in the four years, which makes it the English Department with the highest student intake of all the universities in Sri Lanka, though it has the lowest cadre provision of the three universities with long-established English Departments. The ENGL's reliance on the ELTU is not entirely healthy and may not be feasible once the Head/ENGL ceases to also be the Head/ELTU.

The overall judgement is suspended.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- GENERAL:
  - Staff Development needs to be in-built, so that it takes place annually and in a systematic manner.
  - Peer Observation of classroom teaching should be regularized.
  - The Faculty may wish to institute an appeal process if students wish to have their grades re-evaluated.
  - The relationship between staff-student contact hours and the credit rating of courses needs to be more consistent, since the current system appears to be both misleading and arbitrary, reflecting neither level of difficulty or time allocated per course.

- ELTU:
  - ELTU courses should be revised in keeping with benchmarks for English. A uniform system, which should include duration/contact hours/credits, assessment, monitoring and certification should be introduced.
  - At least one English Language course should be made compulsory for all undergraduates. This decision should come from the ELTU through the Faculty of Humanities to the Senate. This recommendation was echoed by teachers, students and administrators alike.
  - New courses should be designed for the weakest one-fourth of the student population (scoring 0 – 20 at the Placement Test) who appear to be left out of the current programme. It is recommended that a course at beginner level be offered for these students who lack even basic English competency.
  - Offering optional/elective courses to students with higher levels of competence, as well as in areas of special interest, such as Language through Literature
  - The ELTU should continue on its professional path towards becoming a fully-fledged department. This will help the image and acceptability of ELTU teaching staff as well as the credibility and demand for courses.
  - ELTU should keep records of past papers for each course and type of evaluation to enable setters and moderators to maintain standards a) across courses and b) through consecutive years.

- Greater emphasis should be paid on continuous assessment to ensure that students gain the maximum from the classroom experience and to maximize the practical use of English in academic and employment contexts.
- English courses offered at departmental level appear to be ad hoc and lack clear aims and objectives. Since they are not within the ELTU they appear to be insufficiently monitored. All English courses offered by the university should come under the ELTU (whether ESP / EAP). Although course content can be prepared in conjunction with the departments / faculties concerned, the setting of the overall standard, and decisions regarding the curriculum and evaluation should be carried out by English language specialists in the ELTU.

- ENGL:
  - The acute shortage of qualified staff should be remedied as an urgent priority. Only five (05) cadre slots are available, of which one has not been filled and three were on study leave at the time of the Review, leaving only one person to shoulder the entire burden of teaching and administration. It is recommended that the cadre be increased to eight (08), which is still under the agreed 1:20 teacher-student ratio, but which will permit the department to function. It should be noted that Kelaniya has the highest number of students of the three established English Departments in Sri Lanka, but the lowest cadre provision.
  - Student course requirements and sequencing of courses should be streamlined, paying particular emphasis to the distinction between the special and general degrees.
  - Once the acute staff shortage has been addressed, students should be provided with elective courses, as now every course is compulsory, leaving the student no choice at all.
  - Steadily declining standards of language proficiency of students enrolling for English as a subject should be addressed through remedial courses. However it has to be noted that this issue has been partially addressed by the "Written Composition" course unit in the first year.

7. ANNEXES

7.1. AGENDA OF THE SUBJECT REVIEW

DAY - 1 June 28th , 2006 (Wednesday)

08.00 - 09.00 a.m. - Meeting of Reviewers with the Members of the Quality
Assurance Council

09.00 - 09.30 a.m. - Discuss the Agenda of the Review

09.30 - 10.00 a.m. - Welcome Meeting with the Dean/Faculty of Humanities
and Head of Department of English and ELTU

10.00 - 10.30 a.m. - Tea Break

10.30 - 11.30 a.m. - Head ELTU presents Self Evaluation Report

11.30 - 12.30 p.m. - Discussion based on Head's Report

12.30 - 01.30 p.m. - Meeting with ELTU and English staff excluding Head

01.30 - 02.30 p.m. - Lunch Break

02.30 - 03.30 p.m. - Observation of ELTU and Department facilities, Library
and IT Centre

03.30 - 04.00 p.m. - ELTU students meet Reviewers

04.00 - 04.30 p.m. - Tea Break

04.30 - 05.30 p.m. - Brief meeting of Reviewers

DAY - 2 June 29th 2006 (Thursday)

09.00 - 10.00 a.m. - Observe ELTU Class (Mr. Hasitha Pathirana)

10.00 - 10.30 a.m. - Tea with staff (all staff members present)

10.30 - 11.00 a.m. - Meet administrative staff of the ELTU

11.00 - 12.00 a.m. - Observe English Class (Ms. Tanya)

12.00 - 01.00 p.m. - Observe documents

01.00 - 02.00 p.m. - Lunch Break

02.00 - 03.00 p.m. - Meet ESA (English Student Association) students

03.00 - 04.00 p.m. - Tea with English students

04.00 - 05.00 p.m. - Observe documents

05.00 - 06.30 p.m. - Brief meeting of Reviewers

DAY - 3   June 30th 2006 (Friday)

09.00 - 10.30 a.m. - Presentation of research done by ELTU and English staff

10.30 - 11.00 a.m. - Tea with staff

11.00 - 11.30 a.m. - Academic guidance and counseling

11.30 - 01.00 p.m. - Reviewers discussion

01.00 - 02.00 p.m. - Review Team wrap up with ELTU and English staff

02.00 - 03.00 p.m. - Lunch Break

03.00 - 05.00 p.m. - Discussion on Report Writing

7.2. LIST OF TEACHING SESSIONS OBSERVED:

ENGL 11012: Introduction to the English Language
ENGL 11022: Literary Criticism
ELTU 13010: English for Business Communication

7.3. PERSONS MET:

Dean, Humanities: Prof K Kumarasinghe
Librarian: Mr Jayatissa
Snr. Asst Librarian: Mrs Ranasinghe
ELTU: Ms Ramola Rassool, Ms Rohini Widyalankara, Ms Ramani Jaayasinghe, Ms Dilki
Wettewa and Visiting Instructors
ENGL: Dr Manique Gunesekera, Ms Tania Uluwitiya
Non-Academic Staff: Ms Hemanthi Weerasuriya (Clerk), Mr Nimal Ranjith (Office Aide), Ms
Devika (Project Clerk)
Students: Over 25 students representing different batches and faculties from the ELTU and
ENGL.

7.4. LIST OF DOCUMENTS EXAMINED:

 Syllabi, Curricula for both ELTU (selected) and ENGL (all)
Exam papers and answer scripts (few)
Student feedback form (foreign students)
Skills Development Course student feedback
Student Survey (pre-course)
Time tables
Lesson materials, lecture handout
Research publications (faculty journal)
Student Handbook, ELTU flier
Course Unit handbook
 Research presentations (ppt. and hand outs)

7.5. FACILITIES OBSERVED:

ELTU IT Centre
ELTU Building
Classrooms
Dept offices
Staff Lounge
Resource Centre
Department and main libraries

7.6. Detailed Schedule of English Language courses offered by the ELTU (Compiled by Review Team)

Type of course	Name of course	Course objective	Year offered at	Duration	Credit Rating	Course: mandatory / optional Attendance: counted / not counted	Counted towards GPA
Auxiliary	1. English for communication	EAP	1st year	1 yr 2 semesters	2 credits (4 hrs a week)	O +A	Yes
	2. English in today's world	EAP	2nd year 1st semester	1 yr	2 credits (3 hrs a week)	O +A	Yes
	3. Intro to literature	EAP	2nd year, 2nd semester	1 semester	2 credits (3 hrs a week)	O +A	Yes
	4. English for professional purposes*	Workplace	3rd year	1 yr	2 credits (2 hrs a week)	O +A	Yes
	5. Executive skills*	Workplace	4th year	1 yr	3 credits (3 hrs a week)	O +A	Yes
	6. English skills for final years	Workplace	Final year	8 weeks	No credits (10 hrs a week) (2 x 5)	O +A	No

Certificate	Modern languages	General	Years 1,2,3	2 years	0 credit	O -A	No
Mandatory	Business communication	EAP	1st year	1 year 2 semesters	4 hours a week (previously – 8hrs)	Mandatory -A	No
Elective	English reading skills	Fine Arts students	2nd year 2nd semester	2nd year	2 credits (2 hrs a week)	M +A	Yes
ESP	English for medical students	ESP	1st year	10 weeks	15 hrs a week (intensive course) 2006: + academic courses	Mandatory +A	No
	English for biology	ESP	1st year	1 semester	0 credit (2 hrs a week)	Mandatory +A	No
	Pali & Buddhist studies	ESP MA students					
Sponsored	English skills for final years	Work place	3&4th year final	8 weeks		O +A	No
Fee-levying	Diploma for foreign students	Not available at present					
Staff-development	Administrative officers						

* 4 & 5 are mutually exclusive – students who take one cannot take the other
1 credit = 45 hours

In addition to the above, other departments conduct English courses – Library Science, Mass communication , geography (5 courses in all) where the curriculum and standard required is set by the department and not the ELTU. Although a lecturer in the ELTU moderates the final examination papers. The syllabi and course objectives for these courses appear to be vague

Type of course	Name of course	Course objective	Student admission	Assessment	Observations
Auxiliary	1. English for communication	1. English for day to day purposes. 2. For communicative purposes	All students – regardless of placement test marks Grouping up to 2005 – similar ability 2006 – mixed ability	20% Listening comprehension 20% Oral test 60% end of course exam	Placement test: Grammar 40% Fluency (cloze) 10% Vocabulary 10% Punctuation 20% Reading 20% Writing not tested. Continuous Assessment and Final evaluation: Not available in Department
	2. English in today's world	EAP	All students following degrees in disciplines: commerce accounting, management	40% listening comprehension & speech 60% end of course exam	Placement / CA / Final : not available
	3. Intro to literature	EAP			
	4. English for professional purposes*	Function in a professional environment	A pass in E of C or English in Today's world	40% presentations / interviews 60% end of course exams	CA / Final : not available
	5. Executive skills*	Workplace : Skills required in a business / official environment	A pass in A pass in E of C or English in Today's world or English for communication & further studies	40% presentations / interviews 60% end of course exams	CA / Final : not available
	6. English skills for final years	Workplace			

Certificate	Modern languages	General Academic discourse – written / spoken Comprehension & production	In 2nd year or higher in the undergraduate degree. Part II – Pass in Part I or C pass in E of C	1. Part I – grammar, vocabulary, writing 2. oral / listening comprehension Part II – 1.grammar/vocab/writing 2Oral/listening comprehension 3. Critical essay on approved topic	CA / Final : not available
Mandatory	Business communication	EAP: 1. Business communication skills 2. Reference skills 3. Write essay type – expository texts	Commerce & Management faculty	Written paper 100% Listening comprehension & oral test 100%	Placement / CA / Final : not available
Elective	English reading skills	Fine Arts students	Develop reading skills in relation to specialization	Written test 80% Oral test 20%	
ESP	English for medical students	ESP			
	English for biology	ESP			
	Pali & Buddhist studies	ESP MA students			
Sponsored	English skills for final years	Work place			
Fee-levying	Diploma for foreign students	Not available at present			
Staff-development	Administrative officers				