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# SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY



**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA**

17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008

**Review Team :**

Prof. A. D. P. Kalansuriya, University of Peradeniya

Prof. C. Wickramagamage

Dr. A. Lagamuwa, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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Subject review process of the QAA involves evaluating the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline, focusing on the student learning experience and on student achievement. The subject review process evaluates the quality of both undergraduate and taught postgraduate programs. It is understood that the final responsibility for quality and standards remains within the institution itself, since it alone has the powers to control and to change existing practices.

Subject review process at the Department of Philosophy and Psychology of the University of Kelaniya was conducted following the guidelines provided in the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims and learning outcomes given in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

The following eight aspects of education were reviewed at the Departmental level:

- Curriculum design, content and review;
- Teaching, learning and assessment methods;
- Quality of students including student progress and achievements;
- Extent and use of student feedback (both qualitative and quantitative);
- Postgraduate studies;
- Peer observations;
- Skills development;
- Academic guidance and counseling.

Prof. Colin N. Peiris, Quality Assurance Specialist of the QAA Council notified that the following team has been appointed to perform the Subject Review in the Department of Philosophy and Psychology, University of Kelaniya from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

Prof. A.D.P. Kalansuriya, University of Peradeniya  
 Prof. C. Wickramagamage  
 Dr. Ariya Lagamuwa, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

The Agenda for the Review Visit is annexed (Annex 1). The evaluation was based on:

- Meetings held with the Acting Dean of the Faculty, Head of the Department, academic staff, non-academic staff, undergraduates and postgraduates.
- Observation of the facilities at the Department.
- Reviewing documents available in the Department.

The open and cordial discussion that followed was helpful for the evaluation exercise.

The subject review undertaken by us relates to an evaluation of the quality of education within the Department of Philosophy and Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Kelaniya. It is two-faceted. Firstly it focused on the quality of student learning experience and on student- achievement. Secondly, the quality of lecturer response pertaining to this issue.

view - methodology are as follows:

- of the academic staff delivering the academic course of study.
2. Towards obtaining this total yield, academic staff, students (undergraduate/postgraduate) and non-academic staff were reasonably consulted. The key document which made the base was the Self-Evaluation Report submitted by the Department of Philosophy & Psychology. It comprises an exposition in detail, though some important aspects of Level I and Level II Were not properly worked out.
  3. The purposes and aims of this subject-review process are to, as and when necessary, morally and intellectually elevating the quality of academic activity encompassing teaching, research and management.
  4. During the 3 -day fact finding cordial mission (i) all members of the academic staff (except one on sabbatical leave and another on a visit to India), (ii) students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and (iii) two members of the non-academic staff, were met and had friendly exchange of views.
  5. In the sequel, we shall make our positive judgments with support of evidential data.

The departmental academic staff members appear under duress owing to lack of cadre-positions. Presently, the department offers six categories of fulltime degree courses. They are as follows.

- (1). Philosophy - 3 year course - General degree
- (2). Philosophy - 4 year course - Special degree
- (3). Philosophy - Full time postgraduate course leading to
  - M.A. - Course work only - one year course
  - MSSC - Course work and a research component, 2 year course
  - M.Phii - Course work and a research component, 2 year course
- (4). Ph.D. Degree in Philosophy
- (5). Psychology - general degree - 3 year course
- (6). Peace and conflict Resolution - 3 year course (General degree only)

There are 138 students in several of the philosophy courses

There are 105 students in the General Psychology course

There are 105 students in the General course entitled "Peace & Conflict Resolution"

General, Special and Postgraduate fulltime courses, 09 in number, together with 348 full time students have created restraint among 07 fulltime members of the academic staff. Again, one of the members is also the Director of Distance Education & Online programme. The Distance Education unit functions separately. Almost 60000 students registered with this unit for their degrees, diplomas and certificate courses in Kelaniya University. It is obvious that the Director, Prof. Kulasena is needed there for management and administration. For smooth running of the Department of Philosophy, hence additional staff be appointed very early.

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

Philosophy is an independent field of study which was introduced first time in 1959 with the establishment of the Department of philosophy in the Faculty of Arts (when the Faculty of Arts converted into two Faculties such as Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of

of Social Sciences), University of Kelaniya. During the philosophy has performed well and strengthens its In addition to conduct General and Special Degree

Courses in the field of Philosophy, the Department was able to introduce a General Degree Programme in Psychology and a Special Degree Programme in Peace and Conflict Resolution recently. Accordingly, the Department handles 56 course units (Philosophy 20 units, Psychology 16 units and Peace & Conflict Resolution 20 units in different levels) relevant to three different fields of studies as stated above.

The Department also conducts postgraduate programmes pertaining to M.A, MSSc, M.phil and Ph.D. degrees successfully.

### **Academic Staff**

Prof. D. Edirisinghe - Senior Professor

Prof. V.G. Kulasena - Professor (also the Director of Distance Education Unit)

Ven. Prof. Kandegoda Wimaladhamma - Professor and Head of the Department

Prof. J. Seneviratne - Asso. Professor

Dr. P.D.P. Rodrigo - Senior Lecturer Gd. I (on leave)

Mr. G. Hapuarachchi - Senior Lecturer Gd. II

Mr. K.A.T. Dharaneetha - Probationary Lecturer

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

### ***Vision***

The vision of the Department of Philosophy is to become locally and internationally recognized Department which provides opportunities to attain academic excellence and knowledge in the field of studies we are dealing with.

### ***Mission***

The Department of Philosophy wishes to provide opportunities to enhance knowledge, attitudes and skills of the students to face future challenges.

### **3.1. Aims**

3.1.1 To offer general and special degree programmes in Philosophy, psychology, Peace and Conflict Resolution with an analytical approach to fulfill the current requirement of the country.

3.1.2 To provide students with sufficient knowledge in the field of studies to understand human values and contribute to the well being of the society with respect of cultural and economic needs of the day.

3.1.3 To provide students with sufficient knowledge of different areas of our subjects such as Ethics, Psychology, Logic, Eastern and Western Philosophy etc.

3.1.4 To provide students with opportunities to develop their subjects knowledge in the respective disciplines and research and academic abilities through seminars workshops, training programmes and academic field trips with the participation of scholars from outside the university.

3.1.5 To provide an opportunities to strengthen the relationship between students and academic staff to make an enthusiastic learning environment within the Department through the activities of student participation.

ir writing skills.

### 3.2. Learning Outcomes

At the end of the programmes offered by the Department of Philosophy, students will understand the nature and scope of their field of studies relevant to the standards that enable them to compete with future challenges.

#### *Programme details*

The following undergraduates programmes are offered by the Department of Philosophy.

Programme	Duration	Total numbers of Students
B.A.(General Degree) in Philosophy	3 years	124
B.A.(General Degree) in Psychology	3 years	273
B.A.(General Degree) in Peace & conflict resolution	3 years	93
B.A. (Special Degree) in Philosophy	4 years	62

## 4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

The following eight aspects of education reviewed at the departmental level are described in sub sections 4.1 to 4.8.

- Curriculum design, content and review;
- Teaching, learning and assessment methods;
- Quality of students including student progress and achievements;
- Extent and use of student feedback (both qualitative and quantitative);
- Postgraduate studies;
- Peer observations;
- Skills development;
- Academic guidance and counseling.

### 4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

#### *Strengths and Good Practices*

1.The strength of the courses comprises the combination of Philosophy, Psychology and Peace & Conflict resolution. It directly addresses to contemporary problems in Sri Lankan Society.

2. Since students for the course in Peace and Conflict resolution were enrolled by separate window, there is provision to increase the students numbers annually; additional staff has to be recruited.



g with philosophy proper are not included in the syllabi. For example, Level II of the evaluation report of the Department of Philosophy, does not elaborate the key areas or key topics or sections (Both undergraduates and postgraduates expressed their disapproval of this exclusion. This point will be elaborated later in the report)

2. Present syllabi in Philosophy are not revised for some years. Some courses on American Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy which introduced sometime ago, according to students, less and less analytic, hence course contents of them fall outside philosophy - proper. They wish to see current British philosophy be included in their syllabi. These Students were unanimous in this decision.

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

### ***Good Practices***

1. Attempt to cover syllabi on time
2. Encouragement to do assignments
3. Examination-activities are performed methodically
4. Contact of outside experts for moderation of question papers and answer-scripts (Special and postgraduate students)
5. Declaration of examination - results on time.

### ***Weaknesses***

1. Staff members engage in Distance Education examination work, hence too much demand on their energies.
2. Staff members engage in A-level examination work; hence too much demand on their energies.
3. Appointing of substitutes or canceling lectures, tutorials, discussions without due notice. Both these take place, often.
4. Unsatisfactory participation of senior staff members in respect of delivery of lectures.
5. Absence of use of audio visual teaching equipment
6. Serious lack of infrastructural facility for staff as well as students.

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

### ***Good Practices***

1. Finishing up examinations on time
2. Satisfactory participation in lectures
3. Good achievements of degree holders
4. Good progress is evident

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

### ***Good Practices***

1. Student-feed back is consistently carried out.
2. Students-feed back - qualitative wise good
3. Students-feed back - quantitative wise good

aining to an academic staff member which is ignored

3. Feedback is not continuously practiced

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

##### ***Good Practices***

1. Results are declared on time
2. External experts are consulted
3. Enthusiasm of academic staff is appreciative

##### ***Weaknesses***

1. Lectures are not methodical
2. Drop-outs are often the case
3. Lecture rooms are not allocated, properly Assignment - writing by the students is poor

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

An attempt is made to introduce it Weaknesses

1. Continuation of it is poor
2. No proper attention

#### **4.7 Skills Development**

##### ***Strengths***

1. Satisfactory research and publication are evident
2. Extra curricular activities are appreciative.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

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

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

***The overall judgment is suspended***



Understanding of the nature of philosophical problems. (Students were not aware of the difference between philosophical problems and other non-philosophical problems) An elaboration of this vital section is recommended.

2. (i) Level (ii) is not elaborated:

Its breakdown is recommended. In the breakdown, it is appreciative. If the following course contents are also included. These are new areas. Philosophical methodology. (Brief exposition)

- Aristotle and philosophical methodology
- Aquinas and philosophical methodology
- Descartes and philosophical methodology
- David Hume and philosophical methodology
- Kant and philosophical methodology
- George Hegel and philosophical methodology
- Brief expositions of analytic methodology in Analytic Philosophy
- Course outlines needs to be prepared for every course in order to develop more student- centered learning process.
- 9. It is desirable to return to the students the assignments submitted by them with assigned grades and comments.
- 10. Course - contents needs re-examination for upliftment.
- 11. The Department may pay attention to Monthly departmental meetings.
- 12. Staff and students should be encouraged to read more books in the subject-matter

(ii). Another key area in philosophy is made known diagrammatically. (See attached diagram entitled විශ්ලේෂී දර්ශන විෂයයේ ස්වරූපය)

3. Introduce at least one course in Philosophy in English for a start. Introduce two courses in English on philosophy at level (ii) or level (iii). Check the improvements before proceeding to additional courses in English in both levels (ii) and (iii) and postgraduate courses.

4. Students (both undergraduates and postgraduates) should be encouraged to read key books on philosophy which remain untouched in the campus library.

5. Computer facility should be improved very early.

6. The existing vacancy should be advertised very early.

7. At least 02 additional cadre positions for the academic staff.

8. The existing computer application- assistant is overloaded with, in this comparatively large department of study. Accordingly we recommend that two computer application assistants (temporary) be appointed.

9. On health conditions, office-space needs air-conditioning, very early

10. Sufficient space to be allocated to the department of philosophy from the new building as existing space is not enough to do lectures and their academic activities. Though the department conducts 03 degree programmes is allocated one small lecture room only. As an immediate solution to this congestion, we recommend that the existing K1-013 room be allocated.

**Day 1 – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

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

**Day 2 – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

09.00 ó 09.30	Observing Teaching ó Lecture
09.30 ó 10.00	Observing Teaching ó Lecture
10.00 ó 11.00	Observing Documents ( <i>Working Tea</i> )
11.00 ó 12.00	Meeting with Technical Staff and Other Non-Academic Staff
12.00 ó 12.30	Meeting with Postgraduate Students
12.30 ó 13.30	<i>Lunch</i>
13.30 ó 14.00	Observing Teaching ó Lecture
14.00 ó 14.30	Observing Teaching ó Lecture
14.30 ó 15.00	Observing Studentsø Presentations
15.00 ó 15.30	Observing Teaching ó Practical Class
15.30 ó 16.30	Meeting with Special Degree Students
16.30 ó 17.00	Meeting of Reviewers

**Day 3 – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

09.00 ó 09.30	Observing Teaching ó Practical Class
09.00 ó 09.30	Observing Teaching ó Practical Class
10.00 ó 10.30	Meeting Student Counselors/Academic Advisors/Personal Tutors
10.30 ó 11.00	Reviewers Private Discussion
11.00 ó 12.00	Meeting with Head and Staff for Reporting
12.00 ó 13.00	<i>Lunch</i>
13.00 ó 17.00	Report Writing



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## **OBSERVED**

- University of Kelaniya: Calendar 2006
- Examination question papers
- A set of answer scripts marked by first examiners
- BA Philosophy Special degree syllabus
- BA Philosophy General Degree syllabus
- MA/MSSC/M.Phil. Degree syllabai (Philosophy)
- BA General psychology syllabus
- BA General Peace and conflict Resolution syllabus
- Staff time tables
- Dissertations submitted by B.A. Special Philosophy students (random)
- Staff Research Publications



## The Nature of Analytic Philosophy විශ්ලේෂී දර්ශන විෂයයේ ස්වරූපය

