

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL STUDIES



***FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES
OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA***

4th to 6th May 2010

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1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

This report presents the findings of the subject review conducted at the Department of Legal Studies (DLS), Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) during 4th to 6th of May 2010 under the guidance of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) Council of the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Sri Lanka. Subject review process evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline. It is focused on the student learning experience and on student achievement; and designed to evaluate the quality of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. However, the responsibility for quality and standards lies within the institution itself, since it alone has the power to control and to change existing practices.

Review process was conducted according to the guidelines given in the quality assurance handbook for Sri Lankan universities, published by the CVCD and UGC in July 2002. The DLS, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSC), OUSL submitted a Self Evaluation Report (SER) consisting of eleven sections, namely: Introduction; Vision and Aim; Curriculum Design, Content and Review; Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Quality of Students: Admissions, Student Progress and Achievement; Extent and Use of Student Feedback: Quantitative and Qualitative; Postgraduate Studies; Peer Observation; Skills Development; Academic Guidance and Counseling; and Conclusion. The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims given in the (SER). Intended learning outcomes were not given in the SER, so that reviewing the quality of education was not easy.

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

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

The review team visited the department from 04th – 06th May 2010. The agenda of the three day visit is attached (see Annex 1).

The evaluation of eight aspects was based on:

- Meetings held with the QA specialist of the QAA Council of the UGC of Sri Lanka; Vice Chancellor of the OUSL, Dean of the FHSS, Head of Department, academic staff, non-academic staff, library staff of the university, Chief Student Counselor, Student Counselors of the Faculty and the Department, Undergraduates, graduates; In-charge of the AV centre, In-charge of the Video Home, officials in the Colombo Regional Centre;
- Observation of physical facilities of the Department, lecture rooms of the Colombo Regional Centre, seminar rooms, University and Departmental libraries, etc.;
- Presentations of Media house, AV materials;
- Reviewing research publications and available documents at the Department; and
- The presentation made by the Department on Self Evaluation.

Each of the eight aspects was judged as good/satisfactory/unsatisfactory, based on strengths, good practices and weaknesses in each.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT

The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) was set up for the purpose of providing higher educational facilities to persons above 18 years of age with relevant basic qualifications. Established under the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978, incorporating with its system the External Services Agency (ESA) and the Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education (SEIDE) the OUSL commenced its operation in 1980. The present activities of OUSL are based on the provisions of the above Act and Open University of Sri Lanka Ordinance No.1 of 1990, as amended by the Ordinance No.12 of 1996. Currently OUSL operates through 28 Regional Educational Service Centers. The network consists of 4 regional centers in Colombo, Kandy, Matara and Jaffna and 17 study centers and 7 smaller teaching centers. The Central Campus and the Colombo Regional center of OUSL are situated in Nawala, Colombo.

OUSL has the same legal and academic status as any other national university in Sri Lanka. It is the only recognized university in Sri Lanka where students are able to pursue further education by distance education techniques in keeping with the philosophy of Open and Distance Learning. The programmes are conducted by the four Faculties viz. Education, Engineering Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences and Natural Sciences through nineteen Departments of Study.

Vision of the University

The OUSL vision is to *be the leader in distance education in South Asia within the first decade of the 21st century and be a premier centre of learning, renowned for excellence.*

Mission Statement

The OUSL mission is *to enhance opportunities for life-long learning of adults through Open and Distance Learning and support excellence in research and scholarship.*

Unlike in conventional universities, the students of the OUSL have to bear a part of the cost of their education. However, the openness of the university with regard to its academic activities makes it an attractive choice for the employed and therefore approximately 80 percent of the student population today is those who are employed. It also has the largest student population with over 25,000 students on roll.

The organizational structure of the OUSL is similar to that of conventional universities. Apart from the academic departments, there are other units that are under the guidance of the Registrar of the University. In attempting to meet the demands for globalization of education, equality in educational opportunities and provision of lifelong education, OUSL offers 42 programmes with over 900 courses.

Profile of the Department of Legal Studies

The Legal Studies Department was first established in 1983 as a Law Division in the Board of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Open University under the guidance of Prof. Savitri W.E. Goonesekere, a renowned scholar in the sphere of legal education in Sri Lanka. Initially the Law Division had only one Professor, one Lecturer and three Educational Assistants when it started its LL.B. Degree Programme in 1984. Today the Legal Studies Department which is a fully fledged department of study in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has 16 academic staff members which include four of its own graduates. Out of these 16

permanent staff members, four are on study leave to read for their postgraduate degrees and one has been released to assume the position of Deanship of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The existing staff under the guidance of the Dean of the Faculty of HSS has been able to run the LL.B. Degree Programme in accordance with the expectations of the University and its Senate. The Department opened a computer laboratory for its students in 2003 with the assistance of the Legal Aid and Judicial Reform Project of the Ministry of Justice. The laboratory presently has 10 computers with internet and printing facilities and is opened for law students during the working hours. The Department is also running a Legal Aid Centre with the assistance of the Access to Justice Project (A2J) of the UNDP. The Centre has two main objectives. First, it is intended to provide undergraduate law students the opportunities to experiment in a contextual setting what they have learnt from textual sources which in turn would also harness and develop the students' clinical legal skills. Second, the Centre is also aimed at providing, as part of the Department's community responsibility, free legal aid to disadvantaged groups of Sri Lankan society.

The DLS is located in the premises of the FHSS, which is a part of the central administrative precinct of the OUSL in Nawala. The main lecture halls that DLS uses for day schools are located within the Faculty premises and the Colombo Regional Centre. The DLS also has multi-media facilities. The students registered for the undergraduate programmes can use the OUSL Library located within the central campus. Library facilities are also available at Regional Centers. The Department also provides limited services to students through the OUSL's network of Regional Centers and Study Centers scattered all over the island. Services available at some of these centers include day-schools, text book reference, audio-visual aid, Computer lab with Internet facility, distribution of printed study texts and conducting examinations and counseling. Currently Department has 3 senior lecturers with PhD, 4 senior lecturers with other postgraduate qualifications, 6 lecturers, 2 temporary lecturers, 2 lecturers on contract, an educational assistant and 4 project assistants. The Professor Chair is Vacant and 4 lecturers are on study leave reading for PhD or L.L.M. There are about 80 Visiting Day School Academics who serve in all Centres. The Academic Staff of the Legal Studies Department visit the regional centers from time to time, meet the Visiting Day School Academics in the regional centers and provide necessary training regarding conduct of day schools, the areas that should be covered within a specified timeframe and marking of test and examination scripts.

The total number of students registered for the academic year 2009 /2010 is 2631. This number consists of both active students as well as students who have obtained studentship either at their own will or by obtaining eligibility for courses. This student population is dispersed in the regional centers of Colombo, Kandy, Matara and Jaffna. While the majority of the student population i.e. 2089 has registered for the programme at the Colombo Regional Centre, 346 students have registered in the Kandy Regional Centre, 153 in the Matara Regional Centre and 43 students in the Jaffna Regional Centre.

The Vision of the DLS

The vision of the Department of Legal Studies is “*a Truly Liberated Dignified Human Society Based on the Principle of Rule of Law*”.

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1 Aims

In line with the vision the aims of the Department in developing its Bachelor of Laws degree programme have been:

- to teach the core courses in law required of such a programme whilst introducing changes and modifications so as to combine the necessary professional orientation with some of the basic philosophies in distance education.
- to develop intellectual skills of reasoning and investigation, analysis and critical thought.
- to convey an understanding of the law in action and of the role of law in society as well as theoretical aspects of laws.
- to cultivate the ability to handle complex facts, analytically and synthetically and to apply the law to factual situations.
- to help students to communicate, both orally and in writing in a clear, concise and effective way.
- to teach skills needed for legal research, and to develop the ability to understand relevant work in other disciplines such as philosophy, economics, sociology, history and political science.
- to stimulate interest in the historical development of the law and its effectiveness in the social context in which it operates.

3.2 Learning Outcomes

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO) are not developed.

LL.B. Degree Programme

The LL.B. Degree Programme which was commenced in May 1984 developed itself during the past 20 years to become the most demanding Degree Programme with a very good success rate in the Open University. Every year around 8000 applicants seek admission to the Open University LL.B. degree programme. However, out of this only about 500 are actually admitted mainly due to various resource constraints.

The admission criteria for the LL.B. Degree Program is those candidates who have

- (a) Successfully completed any Open University Foundation Course at Levels 1 and 2; OR
- (b) Obtained four passes, at the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) Examination (under the old syllabus which has 4 subjects) of which at least three passes should have been obtained at one sitting and the other subject should have been completed in another attempt; OR
- (c) Obtained three passes at one sitting at the General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) Examination (under the new syllabus which has 3 subjects); OR
- (d) Secured an equivalent or higher qualification acceptable to the Senate

been eligible to apply to sit for the Admission Test. Test conducted by the Legal Studies Department. Attorneys at Law who apply for the programme are enrolled as direct recruits and are exempted from Level 3 or first year courses. They start their academic activities from Level 4 of the programme.

Initially the degree programme was started as a four academic year Programme spanned over six calendar years. However since 2004 the Department has been able to bring down the total period of study to four calendar years. This was achieved by making necessary adjustments in the way the programme is administered, without affecting the examination system, course content or academic standards.

The LL.B. Programme is conducted in the regional centers of Colombo, Kandy, Matara and Jaffna. The students attached to each of these centres attend day schools, submit their assignments and sit for Tests and Examinations at these Centres. The LL.B. Degree Programme is one of the most successful programmes of the University in terms of higher number of output of graduates and income generation for the University.

The LL.B Degree Programme offers 17 courses throughout its four academic years. Out of these 17 courses, 15 are compulsory while 2 are optional. A student must complete 16 courses in order to complete the degree programme successfully

Curriculum content

Level 3 (First Year)

<u>Course Code</u>	<u>Course Title</u>
LWU1411	Introduction to the Laws of Sri Lanka
LWU1412	Legal Method
LWU1201	Constitutional Law I
LWU1202	Principles of Equity

Level 4 (Second Year)

<u>Course Code</u>	<u>Course Title</u>
LWU2311	Law of Contracts
LWU2312	Criminal Law
LWU2313	Family Law
LWU2314	Constitutional Law II

In order to be promoted from Level 3 to level 4 of the LL.B programme, a student must have completed LWU 1411 Introduction to the Laws of Sri Lanka, LWU 1412 Legal Method and LWU 1201 Constitutional Law I which are considered core courses. A student may move up from Level 3 to Level 4 without obtaining eligibility for LWU 1202 which is not a core course. In such a case such student would have to omit one course in Level 4 so as not to exceed the 2 credit limit explained above. However if such student has obtained eligibility for LWU 1202 and has not passed that course at the final examination, he/she is offered all the four courses in Level 4.

Level 5 (Third Year)

<u>Course Code</u>	<u>Course Title</u>
LWU3311	Administrative Law
LWU3312	Land Law
LWU3314	Environmental Law
LWU3315	Public International Law

In order to be promoted from Level 4 to level 5 a student must have completed all courses in Level 3 and Level 4.

Level 6 (Fourth Year)

Course Code Course Title

LWU4321	Jurisprudence
LWU4323	Labour Law
LWU4324	Commercial Law
LWU4325	Human Rights Law.
LWU4326	Law of Delict

In order to be promoted from Level 5 to level 6 of the LL.B programme a student must have completed all Level 3 and Level 4 courses and also obtained at least eligibility¹ for all courses in Level 5. If the student fails to get eligibility for one course out of four courses at Level 5, he/she is not permitted to proceed to Level 6. At Level 6 LWU4321 Jurisprudence and LWU4326 Law of Delict are compulsory courses. Students may choose any two courses out of the three optional courses.

Certificate in English for Academic Purposes (Legal Studies)

Though all the other law schools in Sri Lanka require their students to possess at least a Credit Pass at the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) Examination for English language at the time of application to enter their programme, the Open University does not insist on such a requirement but has made an adjunct English component a compulsory part of the Degree Programme. This adjunct English Language course is conducted by the Language Studies Department, a constituent academic Department of the Faculty of HSS. The programme is aimed at developing academic and professional skills in English which are necessary for law students.

All students who are selected to the LL.B programme are tested on their English language ability at a Grading Test. Depending on their performance at this test, they will either be exempted from or required to follow the English language programme at the relevant level. Those who are selected for the Beginners course are required to follow the English Language programme for three years, while those who get selected for Part I of the course are required to follow the programme for two years. Those who are selected for Part II need follow the programme only for one year. Day schools for the programme are arranged and conducted by the Language Studies Department.

Successful completion of this adjunct English language course is a prerequisite for the award of the LLB degree. Further, students who successfully complete the course are, in addition to the LLB degree, awarded the Certificate in English for Academic Purposes (Legal Studies).

Inter Department/Faculty Study Programmes.

The Department also provides services to other Faculties and Departments of the University. It conducts a course titled “Understanding Law” under the course code LWU 1160 to the Faculty of Natural Sciences undergraduates. This course provides an overall knowledge in a nutshell about the history of the Sri Lankan legal system, Constitutional Law, Law of Contracts, Family Law, Labour Law, Criminal Law and Land Law. The Department of Legal Studies takes the responsibility of administering this course i.e. preparing the study materials, conducting day schools, setting question papers for Assignment Tests and Final Examinations and marking of answer scripts. Another course is offered for students of the Master of Technology in Industrial Engineering programme of the Faculty of Engineering Technology under the course code LWJ 7130, Law and Industry. The Department offers another course

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

Findings of the review team are presented here under the 8 categories given in the guidelines for subject reviews.

4. 1 Curriculum Design, Content and Review

The LL.B Curriculum designed and implemented by the Department of Legal Studies, OUSL is reasonably comprehensive giving its Law graduates a rounded exposure to the discipline of law. Revisions, although not major ones, have been effected to make the program to meet the emerging demands of the profession. Recent additions have given the Degree a contextual flavour which would be welcome by the industry. Having said that, it is recommended that, the Department makes use of its staff to revise the curriculum on a regular basis, update, and in certain cases, revise substantially the existing course materials to bring them upto date with the current developments. It would also be desirable for the Department to offer more electives/options so that students can be given some flexibility with regard to ‘specialization’ within the programme.

Overall judgment given in this regard is ‘SATISFACTORY’.

4. 2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Teaching, Learning

There are many qualified teachers in the Department although it needs more staff trained at postgraduate level. Although the situation in the Colombo Regional Centre, with regard to the staff strength, is satisfactory due to the availability of qualified Visiting Faculty, it cannot be said so with regard to the Regional Centres located in other places. Some of the Regional Centres do suffer very badly with regard to qualified academics to take upon the responsibility of teaching. As for the availability of the teaching aids, the facilities available in the Colombo Regional Centre too are very primitive and they have to be modernized and audio visual mediums must be made available to make the teaching more effective and efficient. The environment for learning has also to be paid attention to as some of the physical conditions under which the learning by students within the campus takes place are very unsatisfactory and do not facilitate a learning environment. Also although there is a necessity to complete the programme within a reasonable period of time, the duration of the programme should not be abridged to too short a period which will affect the quality of education as well as the students’ desire and ability to study the discipline at a reasonable pace.

Assessment Methods

The assessment methods adopted by the Department fall in line with the general practice in the University itself as well as in other major universities. In course assessment and end of course assessment are employed to evaluate a student’s performance at the Examination.

They are satisfactory; but it may be desirable if two independent markings are employed on randomly drawn scripts to maintain quality and integrity of the Examination.

The judgment of the team with regard to this aspect is 'SATISFACTORY'.

4.3 Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

The admission test conducted to admit students to the programme ensures that those who enter possess a good degree of motivation and ability to undertake the programme. Having said it is also true that a majority of students who are working students find it sometimes difficult to manage their work with studies; thus there seems to be some drop in the pass rate due to factors beyond the control of the Department. This has affected on the progression of students and their achievement. Availability of relevant reading materials and easy access to the latest materials which will give them an impetus has to be ensured. This is somewhat lacking due to resource constraints. This has to be addressed in earnest.

In relation to this aspect the judgment of the team is 'GOOD'.

4.4 Extent and Use of Student Feedback

The students attached to the Department of legal Studies have many avenues to present their feedback formally. They are:

1. Through the student representatives at the HSS Faculty Board.
2. Occasions where students and teachers meet at Day Schools to discuss their subject matters.
3. Through the students counselors.
4. Through the formal questionnaires occasionally given to the students get their response on the courses given by the department.

It was noted that a Formal student feedback is not a regular practice in the department adopted by all lecturers for all courses. In the course units where receiving student feedback is an accepted practice, the information has not been formally analysed even though informally it might have been used for the purpose of improving the quality of the course. However, the review team noticed some informal students' feedback form is lined to very few course units and it can be considered as a good initiative by the DLS. It should be further discussed and develop in order to use in all programmes.

The day school sessions which require involvement of the students in discussion classes under close supervision of the academics of the department is another important occasion that facilitates an opportunity for the staff to receive student feedback. The staff has the opportunity to receive feedback when the students visit the Department for various purposes. The Course Coordinators, who are in charge of each Level, discuss pertinent issues with the students, and help to resolve them in consultation with the Head of Department and other staff members. The Coordinators also liaise with the relevant units in the OUSL's central administration such as Regional Educational Services Division and Student Affairs Division. The benchmark surveys on student performance conducted by the staff also provide useful data on students' opinions with regard to academic matters.

The department does not maintain any records of quantified student feedback data. In such instances, the department has not taken initiatives to ensure that the system is properly in

place. The review team is of the view that this is an aspect that needs to be formalized and strengthened.

Judgment given in this regard is ‘SATISFACTORY’.

4.5 Postgraduate Studies

The Department does not run any postgraduate courses, though it has taken meaningful steps to commence one in the near future in the specialized area of Criminal Justice and Criminal Law. This is a welcome move and the Department should be congratulated for coming up with such a programme. It is hoped that the proposed Master’s programme will be commenced before the end of this year.

In relation to the postgraduate studies the judgment of the team is ‘SATISFACTORY’.

4.6 Peer Observation

Despite the fact that the Department does not have any formalized mode for peer observation, the Department encourages its members to observe teaching methods adopted by each other at day schools. Similarly an opportunity to observe the performance of examiners at Oral Presentation sessions is received by peers when at least 3 examiners sit together in the examination panel. Flow of knowledge from the senior lecturers to the temporary staff members occur with regard to teaching methods, stretching out the guidelines to students regarding assignments, marking of assignments and answer scripts.

Staff members and the visiting academics informally exchange their teaching experiences at various meetings. Visiting academics are specifically guided to conduct day-schools in an open and distance learning environment. Through the annual meetings held with the tutors and examiners of the LL.B. Programme, the tutors and examiners are provided training regarding the marking of scripts and conducting day schools.

In addition, the members get an opportunity to share their teaching and examination marking experiences at informal meetings at the Departmental level. Staff meetings are supposed to be held regularly and devote a considerable time for lecturers to put forth their problems and discuss ideas regarding the courses they take, and for others to review them. A praiseworthy extent of uniformity and standardization are achieved in the courses offered by the department due to the close collaboration of lecturers in the department.

Moderation of papers, Second marking and panel marking adds to the opportunities available for peer observation in the department.

In relation to the peer observation the judgment of the team is ‘SATISFACTORY’.

4.7 Skills Development

The curriculum and contents of the courses designed have incorporated elements which go to help students to acquire skills needed for a Law Graduate and a Law Practitioner to function effectively. However, due to the nature of the teaching mode and learning mode adopted in the open and distance method of the programmes, it is sometimes difficult to get all the necessary skills developed in the students. And it is further difficult to monitor and measure the acquisition of the necessary skills by these students. There should be more

inter-action between the staff and students to ensure that the students do not only get the necessary knowledge, but also are exposed to real life situations which will throw them to develop the necessary skills to face such eventualities.

Due to the nature of the mode of teaching (distance learning mode), it is evident that the Department is not in a position to actively encourage the students to participate in extra curricula activities such as moot court competitions, address to the jury competitions, mock trial competitions. However, if they could carve out sometime during the course of the programme to encourage them to participate in these activities, it will help them to gain skill training in art of advocacy. The legal aid programme and the research paper to be submitted by students are good examples of training in practical skills.

Judgment given in this regard is ‘SATISFACTORY’.

4.8 Academic Guidance and Counselling

A number of programs are in place to offer academic guidance and counselling to students. Initially academic counselling is done at the time of registration. New students are explained the number of minimum courses that they are required to follow, the nature of each of the course offered to them and regarding day schools, etc. A handbook is distributed among all new students with their course materials. An academic staff member is always available at the registration desk to facilitate academic counselling. Academic counsellors the registration desk take every endeavour to understand the difficulties of students whether personal or professional and provide solutions for their problems.

An orientation programme is conducted for all new students before the commencement of the academic year at the Colombo Regional Centre. The students are introduced to the LL.B. Degree programme, the distance learning study system, use of the Library, the staff at the Legal Studies Department, the Coordinators for each Level, the different Divisions in the University which they should contact in case they need etc. and are encouraged to ask questions that they have.

Details on events such as day-schools, academic activities and examinations are disseminated to students mainly by mail. Basic course information is available in the Faculty Handbook and the Department Prospectus given to new entrants as well as in the University website. Course information and degree entry requirements are further elaborated as part of the faculty orientation program organized for first year students. It is in this orientation that students get their first formal instructions on course.

Academic staff is readily available to provide guidance and assistance to students, with prior appointment. The Course Level Coordinators are the focal point dealing with all academic matters pertaining to a particular Level.

Students are encouraged to meet the staff of the Legal Studies Department who has expertise in areas the students select for their Project Report and obtain guidance regarding writing of the Project Report. The Progress of the students is closely monitored by asking them to submit a letter from the Attorney at Law under whose guidance he/she collects material for the Project Report. Students who are unable to find a suitable lawyer or have difficulties in selecting an area of law or a case receive guidance and assistance from the staff of the Department and are directed to Legal Aid Organizations who accommodate them.

We understood that alumni activation occurs mostly through the prompting of the Department. Perhaps the Department should take an initiative to enhance the dynamics of the existing alumni association and make its work more formal so that it can play a more formal and dynamic role, particularly in career counselling, job placement and offering internship opportunities for graduating students. This constitute of individual access to lecturers who can advise students on a wide range of issue from academic matters to personal issues. While this opportunity clearly and has been recognized and utilized by the Department, it is our observation that its outreach potential can be further expanded.

In relation to academic guidance and counselling the judgment of the team is ‘GOOD’.

Department of Legal Studies of the Open University of Sri Lanka, considering the information presented in the Self Evaluation Report and during the review process. It was noted that the department has the internal capacity to improve and address much of the deficiencies prevailing at the moment. However, certain structural limitations faced by the department at the time of the review including the inadequate physical space and large student numbers were taken into consideration in arriving these judgements by the review team.

Aspect Reviewed	Judgment Given
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	Satisfactory
Skills Development	Satisfactory
Academic Guidance and Counselling	Good

5.CONCLUSIONS

1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Strengths/ Good practices

- The present is a comprehensive, giving to students a firm and overall understanding of the principles and practices of the discipline of law.

Weaknesses

- The revision and updating of the curriculum should be done on a regular basis and in the process stake holders, well-wishers and former colleagues, must also be invited to be honor witnesses to the process of curriculum design, review and content development.

2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Method

Strengths/ Good practices

- Present teaching, learning and assessment methods are not seriously flawed, though there are many areas where these can formulate a Methodical approach to the problem.

Weaknesses

- The frequency of students meeting their lecturers is curtailed

3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievement

Strengths/ Good practices

- Conduct of Admission Test to select the students for the programme is a very good step to recruit suitable students to the programme. This gives the Department an opportunity to go for students who have the necessary bent for and basic understanding of the discipline. In many of the countries, the discipline of law is taught as a postgraduate programme, though Sri Lanka has not been adopting such process.

Weaknesses

- Completion rate of the degree programme within the stimulated time period is low

4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback

Strengths:

- Mainly used informal ways.
- Students' Representation at faculty level
- An attempt is made in introducing a feedback form into the teaching and learning process.
- A few senior academic staff members have identified it as a vital aspect.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of serious consideration of the system among many senior staff members.
- No analysis available and no utilization of the system in improving the quality of education in the department.

5. Postgraduate Studies

Strengths/Good practices

- Moderation of question papers is in practice.
- Setting, moderation and panal marking.
- Junior staff members are guided by senior staff.
- Collaborative research and publications

Weaknesses

- No formal peer observation
- Second marking is limited
- Junior staff attends the lectures done by the senior staff; however no feedback is expected.
- Departmental meetings are not held regularly.

6. Peer Observation

Strengths/Good Practices

- The steps taken to initiate a postgraduate degree programme shows the strength of the Department.
- It also demonstrates that the Department is coming of age and capable of providing further education in law for people who would wish to specialize in the designated area.

Weaknesses

- The Department should get at least two more academics trained fully or somewhat further exposed to the area of study chosen for the postgraduate programme at Master's level.
- Dependency on too many outside resources may not augur well for the programme.

7. Skills Development

Strengths/Good Practices

- The Legal aid programme and research paper component in the final year are providing opportunities to develop certain desirable skills, though the method of assessment in other subjects to provide the training of general skills to students.

Weaknesses:

- The Department should focus on introducing more activities which will train and assess in the acquisition of skill.
- The legal profession requires certain special skills and the programme offered by the Department should incorporate them as well.

8. Academic Guidance and Counselling

Strengths/Good Practices

- Availability variety of modes of academic guidance including Faculty Handbook, the Department Prospectus, University website.
- Usual university counselling system is in practice
- Level coordinators are appointed
- Orientation programmes providing the students with necessary information and backgrounds.
- Informal contacts between individual lecturers and the students providing opportunity to give and seek advice on issues pertaining from academic matters to personal issues.

Weaknesses

- no trained counsellors
- No office space for counselling
- Students relying more on informal rather than formal counselling and guidance programs

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The review team is agreed unanimously on following recommendations. They are:

1. Considering the burden bared by the DSS it is advisable to established a Faculty of Law
2. Create carder provisions to fill the shortage of teachers for introducing more subject disciplines
3. Provision of appropriate physical facilities i.e. well equipped classrooms
4. More supporting staff to let loose the administrative works bared by the academics
5. Simplify the general administrative procedures to avoid delays and inefficiency
6. Conversion of semester, credit and GPA system in line with that of Sri Lanka University system
7. More day school sessions
8. Kind of tele-communication system be introduced to the benefit of students in outstations.
9. Clear mechanism is needed for counting the workload
10. Expedite the curriculum revision process addressing all the identifiable deficiencies
11. Marking schemes for all the Question papers be prepared
12. Weightage for Continuous assessments should be increased from 30% to at least 40%
13. Practical training programmes are conducted
14. Concern on promoting and encouraging students to use online study programmes.
15. More emphasis to conduct LLM programme
16. Higher degree committee/Postgraduate Faculty be set up to conduct all the postgraduate programmes.
17. .More effectively utilizing the existing human resources in the department for the development of postgraduate programmes
18. Student feedback procedures need to be formalized considering the future benefits that the department may receive through this process by making it an integral part of teaching in every study program
19. Adopt the practice of peer evaluation as a formal system according to established guidelines in this regard. This would prevent falling into various pitfalls with regard to the system which often causes unwanted problems.
20. Provide more residential facilities for students
21. Appointment of a professional counsellor.

7. ANNEXURES

Annex 1. AGENDA FOR THE SUBJECT REVIEW VISIT

Day 1 – 4th May 2010

- 08.30 – 9.00 Meeting with the QAA Council Representative and the Review Panel
09.00 – 9.30 Meeting with the Vice Chancellor/ QAA Council Representative/ Dean/Head of the Dept and the Review Panel
09.30 – 10.00 Discuss the Agenda with Head of Department
10.00 – 10.15 Self introductions of the staff of Dept. of Legal Studies
10.15 – 10.30 Tea
10.30 – 11.00 Observing Departmental Facilities
11.00 – 12.30 Observation of Learning Environment
12.30 – 13.30 Lunch
13.30 – 14.00 Meeting with Chief Student Counsellor and HSS Student Counsellors
14.00 – 15.00 Department presentations on the SER
15.00 – 15.30 Discussion
15.30 – 16.00 Tea
16.00-17.00 Meeting with academic staff
17.00-17.30 Meeting with visiting staff
17.30-18.30 Brief meeting of Reviewers

Day 2 – 5th May 2010

- 09.00 – 09.30 Meeting with Non academic staff
09.30-10.15 observation of research Publications
10.15-10.30 Working Tea
10.30-11.30 Observation of AV materials
11.30-11.45 Meeting with Librarian
11.45-12.30 Observation of Media House
12.30-13.30 Lunch
13.30 – 14.30 Observation of Course materials, Admission criteria, Scheme of Evaluation, Students handbook, Question Papers, Enrolment and Completion rate, etc. of **LLB Level III**
14:30 – 15:30 Observation of Course materials, Admission criteria, Scheme of Evaluation, Students handbook, Question Papers, Enrolment and Completion rate, etc. of **LLB Level IV**
15.30-15.45 Tea
15.45 – 16.45 Observation of Course materials, Admission criteria, Scheme of Evaluation, Students handbook, Question Papers, Enrolment and Completion rate, etc. of **LLB Level V**
16.45-17.45 Observation of Course materials, Admission criteria, Scheme of Evaluation, Students handbook, Question Papers, Enrolment and Completion rate, etc. of **LLB Level VI**
17.45-18.15 **progress Reporting on LLM Programme**
18.15-18.45 Brief meeting of Reviewers

Day 3 – 6th May 2010

09.00 – 09.30 Meeting with Level III students
09.30 – 10.00 Meeting with Level IV students
10.00 – 10.30 Meeting with Level V students
10.30 – 10.45 Working Tea
10.45 – 11.15 Meeting with Level VI students
11.15 – 11.45 Meeting with LLB Graduates
11.45 – 12.30 Statistical Review of the LLB Degree Programme
12.30 – 13.30 Lunch
13.30-14.30 Reviewers' Private Discussion
14.30–15.30 Meeting with Head and Staff for Reporting
15.30-15.45 Tea
15.45-18.45 Report writing

Annex 2. LIST OF FACILITIES OBSERVED

1. Office of the Department
2. Lecturers' Rooms
3. Lecture Halls
4. Legal Aid Centre
5. Department Library
6. Main University Library
7. Colombo Regional Centre

Annex 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

1. Faculty and Department Hand Books
2. Course Outlines
3. Handouts
4. Past Examination Papers (End of Semester)
5. Mid Semester Examination Papers
6. Attendance Sheets
7. Mark Sheets
8. Dissertations
9. Assignments
10. Student evaluation forms
11. Minutes of the Department Meetings
12. Academic staff Publications
13. AV Materials