

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

**DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH SCIENCE**



**FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

19th to 21st September 2006

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1. Subject Review Process

Being public institutions, the accountability of universities for quality and standards is a key factor in safeguarding public confidence in Sri Lankan higher education. The National Quality Assurance system has identified a number of aspects that should be reviewed for quality, within the university system. These aspects have been incorporated into two schemes, namely the Institutional Review Process and the Subject Review Process. The subject review process is about management and assurance of quality at the programme level rather than the institutional level. It evaluates the quality and effectiveness of programmes undertaken by a Department of study and is conducted under the guidance of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) Council of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The Subject review team appointed by the QAA council of the UGC, to look into the quality of education of the Department of Health Sciences, Open University of Sri Lanka, conducted their review during a period of three days, from 19th to 21st September. The guidelines provided in the “Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities” prepared by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Directors (CVCD) and the UGC, were followed in the review process. Accordingly the team focused on eight key aspects of the B.Sc. Nursing degree programme offered by the Department of Health Sciences. These aspects are given below.

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

The information regarding these aspects were obtained through the Self Evaluation Report submitted by the Department, inspection of documents, observing the facilities available in the Department and through discussions with the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Head, members of the academic and non-academic staff and students of the Department of Health Sciences. The agenda of the visit, list of persons met during the visit, list of teaching sessions observed, list of facilities observed and list of documents observed are given in Annexes 1-5.

2. Brief History of the University, Faculty and the Department

The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), which was established in 1980, is a national university constituted under the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 and OUSL Ordinance No.1 of 1990, as amended. It 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 distant education techniques in keeping with the philosophy of open learning and distance education methodology. (Prospectus 2006/2007: Faculty of Natural Sciences). The Ministry of Public Administration has declared by Public Circular No. 16/92 dated 13.03.92 that degrees

offered by the Open University are of the same level as that of other universities in Sri Lanka.

The academic Departments of OUSL are grouped into four Faculties *viz.* Natural Sciences, Engineering Technology, Humanities & Social Sciences and Education. The Faculty of Natural Sciences consists of six Departments, namely Botany, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics & Computer Science, Zoology, and Health Sciences. The Faculty Board of Natural Sciences regulates all the academic activities in the Faculty, under the direction of the Senate of the University.

The B.Sc degree in Nursing is the only degree programme currently offered by the Department of Health Sciences. The degree programme commenced in July 1994 at the request of the Ministry of Health and is being offered only to registered nurses. It is presented through the distance mode as are many similar degrees offered in countries such as Canada, USA, UK, Australia and India. The programme was initiated with academic assistance provided by the Athabasca University, Canada and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for a period of five years (1992 - 1997). The project was over by year 1998 and since then, the responsibility was taken over by the Open University of Sri Lanka (Self evaluation report)

The current number of annual admissions to the Department of Health Science is about 200. The total number of students registered in the Faculty to follow the B.Sc. degree in Nursing at present is 586. Only registered nurses with a minimum of two years experience after qualifying are admitted to the course. The first 2 years of the degree programme at Levels 3 & 4 are exempted for registered nurses (who would otherwise have to follow the course for 4 academic years). They are required to pursue only the final 2 years of the programme at Levels 5 & 6. The academic value of the courses (other than Continuing Education courses in English) for each of these years will be two credits.

The permanent academic staff in the Department comprises 1 Senior Lecturer who is the Head of the Department, 2 Probationary Lecturers and 2 Consultants on contract basis. The rest of the staff consists of 1 administrative consultant for clerical work (on contract) and a Labourer.

The Department is located in the Central Campus at Nawala, Colombo. It has only an area of about 2759 square feet in which an office, a mini Departmental library and a small non-academic staff room is housed. Day schools and other teaching activities are conducted using lecture theatres and classroom facilities provided by the Colombo Regional Centre of the OUSL. There are five functioning personal computers in the Department which are used on a sharing basis. Students are provided with computer facilities at the main computer centre.

3. Aims and Learning Outcomes

3.1. Aims

The education of a professional nurse must contribute to the development of a graduate who will demonstrate a sense of commitment, social and personal responsibility,

sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of others. The programme prepares a nurse who is a “generalist” to provide quality care in every aspect of nursing practice. In this context the aim of the Department is to produce a graduate in nursing with advanced skills who will be able to:

- assume responsibility for better management of care, for teaching, research, and administration in institutions and in the communities;
- have an increased understanding of the health care system of Sri Lanka and be sensitive to national and world-wide nursing issues;
- active in shaping policies affecting the health care system of Sri Lanka that create the optimal environment for maximising health and the delivery of quality care;
- respond appropriately to the continually changing health care environment;
- experience increased overall work satisfaction; and
- obtain the necessary preparation for post-graduate studies.

As nurses, these undergraduates have a major role in every sector of the health-care system. The diversity and complexity of professional nursing practice today, as well as projections of future trends, makes it necessary for them to be prepared to think critically and creatively, and to have a solid education, not only in nursing practice, but also in the related sciences, such as social sciences and humanities. Hence a person with a liberal education, who has had the opportunity to read and study in a variety of areas, will be best prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Consequently, the aim of the Department is to include courses that will develop the undergraduate nurses’ ability to:

- use concepts from the humanities and the behavioural sciences to understand oneself and others, the relationships between people, and the functioning of communities;
- recognise social, political and economic factors and their relevance to social and professional problems;
- use available resources to play a leadership role in whatever sector they serve
- demonstrate fundamental concern, respect, understanding and empathy in human relationships;
- read and write English clearly and effectively so that they will have access to further knowledge that will enable them to share with the international nursing community;
- use mathematical concepts, and interpret quantitative and qualitative data to understand the value of research in the search for solutions to problems;
- articulate a personal philosophy that expresses the values and beliefs, which guide their personal and professional life;
- understand and respect cultural traditions, and recognise similarities and differences among groups and relationships between culture, behaviour, health, and healing.

More particularly, the Department anticipates that the graduates of the OUSL Bachelor of Science in Nursing Programme will be able to:

- use the nursing problem-solving process to promote, maintain and restore health, in co-operation with all clients;
- synthesize knowledge from the physical and behavioural sciences, and from the liberal arts, and use this knowledge as a source for making nursing practice decisions;
- use the research process as a basis for improving the quality of patient care, for implementing change in nursing practice, and for making nursing practice decisions;
- demonstrate leadership and management abilities as a member of interdisciplinary health teams using available resources;

- influence change as necessary in a variety of practice settings;
- demonstrate skill in collecting and utilizing epidemiological data for the improvement of provision of care to clients;
- demonstrate an understanding of present and future factors affecting the health care delivery system;
- use appropriate communication skills in the nurse client relationship, as well as with other members of the health team;
- practice effective teaching skills to promote behavioural and attitudinal changes in clients and other members of the health team;
- demonstrate, through direct advocacy, an understanding of the needs and rights of clients;
- demonstrate an understanding of legislative, regulatory, ethical and professional nursing standards;
- demonstrate an appreciation of the need for continued learning.

3.2. Learning Outcomes

The Department provides advance knowledge in nursing and upon successful completion of the programme, nurses with the following characteristics would be produced.

- They would be able to use the nursing problem-solving process, nursing theories, nursing paradigm to promote, maintain and restore health, in co- operation with all clients/patients, and identify the possibilities for the future development in nursing in Sri Lanka.
- Nursing graduates would be able to synthesize knowledge from the physical and behavioural sciences, and from the liberal arts, and use this knowledge as a source for making nursing practice decisions when they come across with multi national, multi-religious individuals in hospitals and communities.
- As graduate nurses are educated with the research process both in Qualitative methods and quantitative methods, they would be able to read a research article in a critical way.
- They would be able to identify the important aspects of management and leadership qualities and verbal and written communication which enables them to demonstrate leadership and co-ordination abilities as a member of the inter-disciplinary health team and influence change as necessary in a variety of practice settings.
- They would be able to use appropriate communication skills in the nurse client relationship, as well as with other members of the health team maintaining good interpersonal relationships.
- They would have the ability to make research paper presentations confidently.
- They would be good leaders who are capable of understanding the trends and issues affecting the health care system and impacts of those on nursing profession.
- They would be effective teachers who are capable in promoting behavioural and attitudinal changes in clients and other members of the health team. They also will be able to function as teachers in health education institutions.

4. Findings of the Review Team

4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

The main focus of the curriculum is on knowledge and skills development to meet the challenges of the health care system and international nursing. Therefore, the curriculum has been planned to fill the gaps in the knowledge of Sri Lanka nurses in theoretical concepts and principles required to function effectively in various health care settings. The review team considered this fact in forming their opinion that the programme is at a suitable academic level. The programme has obtained the academic assistance of the Athabasca Open University which is an accredited university in Canada. The programme was funded by the Canadian Development Agency (CIDA) for a period of 5 years (1992-1997) during which academic staff, teaching material and various other teaching aids were provided.

The team is of the view that the programme has been organized so as to make suitable intellectual demands on students as they progress through the curricula. The team acknowledges the fact that the programmes offered by the open universities which follow the open distant mode of learning methods, are different from the programmes offered by the conventional universities. The B.Sc. nursing degree being a professional programme has 13 compulsory courses along with an open elective under which six courses are offered. The students have the option of selecting any course of their choice from these 6 courses. The seemingly insufficient choice of subjects could be due to the fact that the B.Sc. Nursing degree is a professional course and hence it is difficult to allow a broader flexibility.

The course content is presented in the Faculty and the Department Prospectus with the other relevant information. The course materials needed for the courses are distributed among the students in the form of books, before the commencement of the course. Except for a few, each book contains the objectives of the particular course.

The team noted that the course on computer studies is optional to the students. The students were of the view that the subject “computer studies” is too difficult and computer applications that would be useful for Health Science is not taught during the course. Hence many students are reluctant to select Computer Studies as a subject. The review team noted that due to this the computer skills of students are not adequately addressed during the course.

The review team noted that the students are offered two compulsory courses in English which enables them to follow the B.Sc. course in English medium while facilitating them to access updated knowledge and to practice in par with the international nursing community. The steps taken in the curriculum design to improve English skills was found to be satisfactory.

A major drawback noted in the curriculum was the fact that the curriculum has not been revised since its inception in 1994. Though a review of the curricula of 5 courses was done in year 2001 by a Canadian consultant who subsequently recommended the rewriting of two courses, the Department has not been able to implement it, due to the many constraints such as lack of funds, lack of staff and subject experts. The Department

agrees that certain courses need to be restructured immediately and hopes to remedy the situation as early as possible.

During the discussions held with the students too, it was highlighted that it is required to update the course materials. The students were of the view that new courses should be introduced as well as revising the present modules offered in the programme. In spite of these drawbacks, the students were of the opinion that the programme is functioning well within the present resource constraints faced by the Department.

The Department offers a number of course units which have been designed to enhance critical thinking skills, leadership and management skills, problem solving skills, teaching and communication skills, presentation skills and writing skills. The presentation skills of students are addressed in the course on teaching and learning and the senior elective research project while the writing skills are specially addressed in a 12 hour non-credit course. The final year research project which is offered as a compulsory senior focus elective helps the students to gain intellectual, analytical and other personal skills while enabling them to develop confidence in preparing for post-graduate studies.

Verbal feedback received from visiting academics, the senior members of the nursing community have been highly satisfactory regarding the performance of students and the curriculum.

New programmes

Curricula have already been drafted and approved in principal for 4 programmes viz B.Sc. degree programme in Nursing admitted directly from A-Level, Diploma in Nursing, Diploma in Pharmacy, B. Pharmacy with the support of the Ministry of Health. Proposals are now being drafted for a Diploma in Laboratory Technology.

Overall, the team is of the opinion that the content and design of the curriculum have been effective in enabling the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes identified by the programme.

*It is the view of the review team that the present state of Curriculum Design, Content and Review adopted by the Department can be judged as **Satisfactory**.*

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

All courses are taught in a combination of printed course materials, supplementary readings, face to face discussions through day schools, counseling, and activities as a means of practicum in the relevant field. Community based assignments/practicums are guided by community health nurses who have been trained as mentors.

The intended learning outcomes of the course and the assessment criteria are given before the commencement of the course, in the written form.

All the Nursing courses (except Anatomy and Nutrition) are provided with two printed books viz. the basic course material and the supporting reading material. Discussions with the students brought to light the fact that there is an inadequate number of text books and Journals in Nursing to cater to the needs of the undergraduates. When the team visited the

library the librarian offered to purchase the Medline service facility to overcome the above problem.

During the meetings held with the students they complained that the books containing the supporting reading materials which consist of mainly Journal Articles are not clearly printed and hence mostly unreadable. However, once the Medline search facilities are made available, the Department can make arrangements to provide the necessary literature to the students via a CD. As a result the Department could create a suitable mechanism to upgrade and revise all the supporting reading materials annually.

Three classroom observations on teaching showed that the observed teachers were competent and confident, and interacted well with the students. The observed lectures were well prepared and met the stated learning outcomes. The team was impressed by the way the students freely answered and asked questions. The students seemed to be much more motivated than the students in conventional universities. The methodology adopted for lecturing was a combination of chalk board, overhead projectors and printed lecture notes. There are facilities to borrow a multi media projector whenever needed.

Assessment of all courses includes formative and summative assessments. The formative assessments are home assignments and the students are given a feedback on these. Weak students are given special attention and additional guidance so that their performance is improved. The final assessment of the final year research indicates the ability of students to carry out independent work and interpret qualitative and quantitative data in the search for solutions to problems.

Though the concept of home assignments is ideal to develop the students' ability to do independent work and improve their writing and other personal skills, most students seem to favor the idea of mid semester exams. Their main complaint was lack of library books and other reading material which are essential to produce a good assignment. The Department may consider making available the essential reading material needed for home assignments at the Department for the reference of students.

Discussions with the students revealed that they were satisfied with the information contained in the handbook and the evaluation methods used during the degree programme.

All final end semester examination question papers are moderated by external examiners approved by the Faculty board and the senate. The marking schemes of the final examination question papers are available with the teacher concerned but not sent to the moderator. Answer scripts were not sent for second marking.

Though all the papers are marked by the same teacher who taught the course, and thereby the errors are minimized the Department may consider sending at least the final examination papers to a second examiner and the marking scheme to the moderator, as it would help to maintain the necessary standards of the course.

*It is the view of the review team that the present state of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods adopted by the Department can be judged as **Good**.*

4.3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

Recruitment and Admission Procedure

All students of the B.Sc. Nursing programme are practicing nurses with varying degrees of nursing experience (2 to 40 years) and represent a wide range in age (25 to 62 years) and geographical distribution.

The student requires the following qualifications to be selected to the programme;

- General Nursing Certificate with two years of post certificate experience
- Registration as a nurse in the Sri Lanka Medical Association
- AND
- Three passes in the Advanced Level examinations OR
- Three credits in Science Foundation courses offered by the Open University OR
- The Post Basic Diploma in Nursing

There is a great demand for this degree programme which cannot be catered for by the Department due to the resource constraints faced (highlighted in other relevant sections of this report). Hence, a selection test is held by the Department to identify the suitable candidates. Eight hundred and fifty applications were issued in 2005 for the admission test. Out of this, 580 sat for the test and only 209 were selected.

Progress and Completion

Unlike the degree programmes offered by the conventional universities, the OUSL distant learning programmes have not specified a time limit for the completion of the programmes. Hence, the completion rates cannot be taken into account to measure the progress of the programme. For the B.Sc. in Nursing the usual time for completion is 4 years but there are a few students who have finished the degree in three years. The number of students who have completed their degree from 1997 to 2005 is 204, out of 500 registered for the programme (40.8%). Of this 87 students have obtained classes.

The discussions with the students revealed that they find the workload too heavy. Their main grievances were against the Ministry of Health who has failed to give them the necessary study leave to follow the course.

Student Achievements

All the students who graduate go back to their original occupation of a practicing nurse. There was dissatisfaction among the students for not getting their due recognition as a graduate in their occupation and about the lack of available postgraduate opportunities.

The review of documents regarding the performance of students showed that the aims and learning outcomes of the programme are being achieved successfully.

Discussions with students showed that there are some indirect benefits gained from the programme, such as,

- B.Sc. Nursing graduates are granted additional 10 marks, at their interviews for promotions, conducted by the Ministry of Health
- Majority of them fare better than the non-graduate nurses, at most of the competitive examinations held in the Ministry of Health
- There is an improvement of English in the students

The main reasons pointed out by the students for enrolling in this programme were to gain knowledge, to give a better service to the patients and to obtain foreign employment. There is a staff and student exchange programme in the Department of Health Sciences in collaboration with the Kristianstad University, Sweden. The selection of the exchange students are based on their academic performance. Two students from each Department are exchanged for 20 weeks while one teacher is exchanged for 4 weeks. To date, 6 Sri Lankan students, 8 Swedish students and one teacher have been included in the programme. The review team had the opportunity to meet the 6 Sri Lankan students, out of which two have already completed their degrees while the rest are yet to complete. These students feel that the main objectives of their visit, which included learning to use data bases and competence in the use of the internet, were achieved during their stay. Their main complaint was the short notice they are given to prepare for this programme and requested the Department to select the two candidates well in advance in future.

*It is the view of the review team that the Quality of Students, Student Progress and Achievements of the Department can be judged as **Good**.*

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

Student feed back is obtained by informal discussions and by using questionnaires. There is no formal assessment of student feed back at present but the future plans of the Department include regular questionnaires, analysis of data obtained and taking appropriate action with regard to its outcome.

The student questionnaires covered the Programme/Course evaluation as well as teacher evaluation. However, there was no evidence that these surveys were conducted on a regular basis and that these feedbacks were utilized and acted upon in response to the issues raised by students.

The review team had three meetings with the students of level 5 and 6 classes and a total of 170 students actively participated at these meetings. During the ensuing discussions it was brought to the notice of the team members that the students' opinions have not been sought and there is no forum for the students to express their opinions. However, the students appreciated the fact that they could meet any lecturer or head of the Department whenever the need arose. The students took the opportunity to complain about the poor printing and binding quality of the educational material given to them by the Department. The lack of required books in sufficient quantities in the library and the inadequate computer training received during the course were the other deficiencies highlighted by the students

There is no student representation at Departmental committees at present. The Department is planning to setup a Staff-Student association on the request of students and already the preliminary arrangements have been made. The members of the Department were of the view that this association could be used as a forum to discuss the problems faced by the students as well as improving the research activities.

*It is the view of the review team that the Extent and Use of Student Feedback by the Department can be judged as **Satisfactory**.*

4.5. Postgraduate Studies

Research Degrees

The Department of Health Sciences does not offer postgraduate courses in Nursing or related areas at present. Perhaps the postgraduate degrees are not currently offered due to two reasons; a) There is only one academic staff member in the Department who is qualified in postgraduate studies (i.e., M.Sc. in Nursing) b) There are only a very few persons in Sri Lanka who have obtained postgraduate qualifications in Nursing

In spite of this, the Department has already established several links with foreign Universities to initiate Postgraduate degree programmes. The M.Sc. in Nursing programme is expected to be offered with the financial support of the European Union in due course. The relevant documents have already been submitted to the Vice Chancellor for her consideration. It will be offered as a research degree and the duration will be two years. The programme also consists of four theory courses (Qualitative and Quantitative Health Research Methods, Bio and Medical Statistics, Literature review and Clinical field Studies) which would help to fulfill the theoretical background of the Postgraduate students.

Research Methods and Training

The Department offers two compulsory courses related to research for all the undergraduate students at level-6. These courses have been successfully implemented and the results seem to be promising. However, there is an insufficient number of qualified academic staff in order to carry out the adequate supervision. The review team is of the opinion that the printed guidelines provided to the students with regard to their research projects, are acceptable.

Supervision & Research Facilities

It was noted that only three qualified academic staff members supervise research students at present (approximately thirteen students per supervisor). It was further noted that one lecturer (who is also the Head, having all the administrative commitments) and two visiting lectures are involved in the supervision of this course. Considering the fact that the intake for the year 2006 is 208 students, it is questionable whether these two research courses can be offered in the future while maintaining quality. It is also noted that major equipment and infrastructure facilities are not required for research work at this Department.

Research-conducted by the Academic Staff

The permanent Academics in this Department are confined to one Senior Lecturer (Head) and two probationary lecturers who have joined the Department only six months ago. The senior lecturer has registered for a research degree (M.Phil.) in year 2002 at the Faculty of graduate Studies, University of Colombo. One of the probationary lecturers has been selected to follow a two-year Masters degree this year with the financial assistance from the ADB. It is appreciated that several attempts have been made to conduct some research while being involved in a very heavy work load.

*It is the view of the review team that the Postgraduate Studies of the Department can be judged as **Satisfactory**.*

4.6. Peer Observation

A significant number of Academic staff, permanent as well as visiting, are involved in the Nursing degree programme. There is no formal procedure for peer observation except an insignificant informal approach. It was informed that the Head of the Department or a senior member of staff informally observe the first couple of lectures delivered by a newly recruited visiting lecturer/s and comments are made in order to improve the quality of the teacher.

The team noted that most teachers work independently without any feed back from the peers, except for the course materials which are written by a group of persons. Second marking of answer scripts and moderation of marking schemes are also non-existent. The review team concluded that the procedures adopted for peer observation is unsatisfactory. It is recommended that such procedures be developed and adopted soon in order to improve the quality of teaching activities.

*It is the view of the review team that the present status of the Peer Observation adopted by the Department is considered as **Unsatisfactory**.*

4.7. Skills Development

Unlike other University students, the Nursing undergraduates are certificate holders in the same field of study. They are employed and have acquired variable years of training in government hospitals throughout the country. Furthermore, these Nursing students have developed their appropriate skills in different advanced fields as well. As the team noted the Levels 5 and 6 do not provide any further practical training except a fairly extensive research training. However, once the diploma course is implemented for the A'Level students (Levels: 3 and 4) several laboratory courses will be established for skills development. As a result, the team of reviewers concentrated on the skills developed specifically in the area of research.

As discussed in section 4.1, There are courses in the curriculum which have been designed to enhance critical thinking skills, leadership and management skills, problem solving skills, teaching and communication skills, presentation skills, writing skills as well as intellectual, analytical and other personal skills. While the English skill are at a satisfactory level, the development of computer skills are inadequate.

*It is the view of the review team that the Skills Development of the Department can be judged as **good**.*

4.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling

All the Academic staff members are involved in Academic guidance and Counseling at the Department of Nursing. The review team is satisfied with the adopted procedure of the effective Academic Guidance and Counseling. Each new student is provided an opportunity to interact with a student counselor from the point of application to receiving their final award. At every step, the students are provided with all the necessary guidance in the form of printed documents. In comparison, the procedures adopted at this Department are perhaps better than the similar processes in conventional Universities.

*It is the view of the review team that the present situation with regard to Academic Guidance and Counseling adopted by the Department can be considered as **Good**.*

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Strengths/Good Practices:

- Curriculum approved by an accredited university
- Learning outcomes of courses provided to students
- Curriculum design to improve English skills satisfactory.
- Courses available to develop personal skills

Weaknesses:

- Curriculum has not been revised since its inception in 1994.
- The views of stakeholders regarding the curriculum have not been sought.
- Computer skills of students are not adequately addressed during the course.

5.2. Teaching Learning and Assessment Methods

Strengths/Good Practices:

- Well prepared course material available to students
- There is a good response from students during lectures.
- Students are continuously assessed during a semester.
- Final year research projects are compulsory for all the students.
- Final examination question papers moderated by external examiners
- Teachers were competent and confident and interacted well with students

Weaknesses:

- Marking schemes are not moderated and answer scripts not sent for second marking.

5.3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

Strengths/Good Practices:

- A great demand for the degree programme
- Students admitted by a selection test
- Improved English knowledge
- Staff-student exchange programme with a foreign university

Weaknesses:

- No specified time limit for completion of the degree

5.4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative

Strengths/Good Practices:

- Student feed back is obtained by informal discussions and by using questionnaires.
- Facility to meet the lecturers at any time
- Course and teacher evaluation in some courses

Weaknesses:

- No formal assessment of student feed back
- No student representation at Departmental committees

5.5. Postgraduate Studies

Strengths/Good Practices:

- Establishment of several links with foreign Universities to initiate Postgraduate degree programmes
- Compulsory research projects for all the undergraduates
- Some staff members involved in research

Weaknesses:

- No post graduate degree programmes offered by the Department
- Low number of qualified teachers to supervise research

5.6. Peer Observation

Strengths/Good practices:

- Informal observation of newly recruited teachers

Weaknesses:

- No formal mechanism for peer observation
- Teachers work independently
- No second marking or moderation of marking schemes

5.7. Skills Development

Strengths/Good practices:

- Development of subject/professional skills
- Development of personal and inter-personal skills

Weaknesses:

- Inadequate computer skills

4.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling

Strengths/Good practices:

- All academic staff members are involved in Academic guidance and Counseling
- Necessary guidance in the form of documents as well as verbally

Weaknesses:

- None

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

Aspect Reviewed	Judgment
Curriculum design, content and review	Satisfactory
Teaching learning and assessment methods	Good
Quality of students including student progress and achievements	Good
Extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative	Satisfactory
Postgraduate studies	Satisfactory
Peer observations	Unsatisfactory
Skills development	Good
Academic guidance and counseling	Good

6. Recommendations

1. There is an urgent need to restructure the curriculum which has not been revised since its inception in 1994. The review team recognizes the fact that steps have to be taken immediately to obtain the necessary funds and staff in order to proceed with the curriculum revision.
2. It is recommended that the involvement of external examiners be increased. The Department may consider sending the marking schemes of all the examination papers to the moderator **and** at least the final year answer scripts to a second examiner.

3. Considering the fact that 60% of the overall mark for a course is from continuous assignments, it is desirable to monitor the home assignments more closely. It may be helpful to the students if books and the essential references needed for home assignments are made available in the Department library.
4. It is suggested to use the internet facilities at the University main library extensively to overcome the unavailability of adequate number of text books and Journals. The Department may consider providing the necessary supporting reading material to the students by way of CDs which contain upgraded knowledge and which would solve the problem of unreadable print.
5. It is recommended that the post graduate research degree in Nursing be offered from next year to facilitate the Nursing graduates to enroll for their higher studies. This could be achieved with the support of the Academic staff of the conventional Universities. The following recommendations are also made in this regard:
 - The course be offered as a fee levying course, that is similar to the postgraduate courses offered by the Faculty of Education
 - Four theory course to be offered as day school workshops
6. The review team recommends that the detailed result sheet (transcript) be altered in order to recognize the Nursing degree as a four year degree. The Open University hand book indicates that the first two years of the Nursing degree programme (Levels 3 and 4) are exempted as all the registered Nurses have followed a Diploma course offered by the Nursing Schools attached to the Ministry of Health and Welfare.
7. The difficulties faced by the students in obtaining their entitled leave to follow the course were highlighted several times during the discussions held with the students. It is recommended that the Department/university brings this matter to the immediate attention of the Health Ministry and make arrangements for the students to obtain their due leave in order to follow the course. Though it is beyond the scope of this review.
8. Importantly the students are not satisfied with the recognition they get, in the Ministry of Health after the completion of their degree. Hence, we would like to stress the importance of addressing this problem/complaint by the authorities and the policy makers in Sri Lanka.

In conclusion, the review team noted that the members of the Department work under stressful conditions as there are only 3 permanent members at present. The workload has been eased somewhat due to the services of the 2 consultants who have been recruited on contract basis. The review team commends the Head and the members of the Department for their motivation and constant efforts to develop the Department in spite of the many constraints, due to lack of staff, funds and other facilities.

7. Annexes

1. List of the Persons met during the Visit
2. List of the Teaching Sessions Observed
3. List of Facilities Visited
4. List of Documents-Observed
5. Revised Review - Department of health Sciences (1999-2006)

1. List of the Persons met during the Visit:

Person	Position
Dr. G. Bandarage	Dean/Faculty of Natural Sciences
Mrs. S.L.H. Vitharanrachchi	Head/Department of Health Sciences
Mr. B.S.S. Silva	Lecturer (Probationary)
Ms. A.V.P. Madhavi	Lecturer (Probationary)
Mr. K. Saranaguhewa	Consultant in Nursing
Mrs. Y.M.L. Amarasooriya	Consultant in Nursing
Mr. B.L.C Gunasekara	Consultant - Administrative
Mr. Dinesh Kumar	Labourer

2. List of the Teaching Sessions Observed:

Teaching Session	Teacher	Subject
Level VI	Mrs. Y.M.L. Amarasooriya	Primary Health Care II
Level V	Ms. A. V.P. Madhavi	Concepts in Nursing
Level VI	Mrs. S. Amarasinghe	Management in Nursing Practice

3. List of Facilities Visited:

1. The Library
2. Temporary Residential Facility (Hostel)
3. Elementary Computer Laboratory

4. List of Documents-Observed

1. Printed Course Materials
2. Department Minutes
3. Samples of Assignments
4. All the documents relevant to admission procedure and Counseling program
5. Question papers: selection test and final examination
6. Teacher feedback and comment sheets
7. Future development plans
8. Self Assessment - Revised version 1999 to 2006

Day 1 (19/09/2006)

8.30 to 9.00	Meeting of the Review Panel with Quality Assurance Council Representatives
9.00 - 9.30	Meeting with the Dean, Faculty of Natural Sciences
9.30 - 10.00	Discuss the agenda of the Review
10.00- 10.30	Tea
10.30- 11.30	Department Presentation on the self evaluation report Head, Department of Health Sciences, Ms. S.L.H.Vithanarachchi
11.30- 12.30	Discussion
12.30- 13.30	Lunch
13.30- 14.30	Observing Teaching (Level 6- Management in Nursing- Conducted by a Visiting Academic Ms. S. Amarasinghe- Sp. Grade Nursing Officer Accident Service, National Hospital of Sri Lanka
14.30- 15.30	Meeting with Department Academic Staff
15.30-16.30	Meeting with Undergraduate Students Level 6
16.30-17.30	Brief Meeting with Reviewers

Day 2- 20/09/2006

9.00- 9.30	Observing Departmental Facilities-compo lab., library, press, hostel
9.30- 10.00	Observing Teaching- Level 6 Primary Health Care II Ms. Y.L.M.Amarasooriya- Consultant
10.00- 10.30	Observing Teaching Level 5 - Concepts in Nursing Ms. P. Madhavi - Probationary Lecturer
10.30- 11.30	Observing Documents (working tea)
11.30- 12.00	Meeting with non academic staff
12.00- 12.30	Meeting with undergraduate students (Level 5)
12.30- 13.30	Lunch
13.30- 14.00	Observing teaching
14.00- 14.30	Meeting with visiting academics - Cancelled as they are unable to come
14.30- 15.00	Observe documents
15.00- 16.00	Academic guidance and counselling
16.00- 17.00	Meeting of reviewers

Day 3 - 21/09/2006

9.00- 10.30	Meeting with six Exchange students. Students who went to Sweden on student exchange program between OUSL and Kristianstad University, Sweden
10.30- 1.00	Reviewers private discussion
1.00- 2.00	Lunch
2.00- 3.00	Meeting with Head and the Staff for reporting