

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF SINHALA



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA**

27th to 29th February 2008

Review Team :

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1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Initiated by the University Grants Commission(UGC) and the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Directors(CVCD), the Quality Assurance Mechanism for national universities was introduced to the system in 2002. Divided as Subject and Institutional Reviews, the process incorporates internal and external assessment of Universities/Departments of study, promoting and safeguarding public confidence in the country's system of higher education.

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) of the UGC/Ministry of Higher Education bears the overall responsibility for the conduct and sustenance of quality assurance activities in universities.

Subject Reviews which deal with individual academic departments of national universities, consider eight key aspects in reaching judgements on the maintaining of quality within such departments. These relate to Curriculum Design, Content and Review, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods, Quality of students (including Student Progress and Achievement), the Extent and Use of Student Feedback (Qualitative and Quantitative), Postgraduate Studies, Peer Observation, Skills Development, Academic Guidance and Counselling.

The Department of Sinhala of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna, was reviewed on 27th, 28th February and 7th May 2008 by a Panel of Reviewers appointed by the QAAC.

The Review Team comprised :

Prof. Jinadasa Danansuriya, Department of Sinhala, University of Kelaniya

Prof. Ananda Tissakumara, Department of Sinhala, University of Colombo

Mr. Chandana Dissanayake, Department of Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

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

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Ruhuna was established at Meddawatte, Matara, in 1979, along with two other faculties. Located at Eliyakanda, Matara, the Department of Sinhala was one of the Departments of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Department was shifted to Wellamadama, in 1985.

The **Vision** of the Department of Sinhala is to be the best and excellent Dept. of Sinhala in the island in promoting the Sinhala Language, Classical Sinhala Literature and Modern Sinhala Literature.

The **Mission** of the Department of Sinhala is to achieve this goal in excellence, every effort would be taken to provide a range of proper learning opportunities in the relevant field.

The Semester System with Course Units based on Course Credits, was introduced at the Department in the year 2000.

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. Aims

Understanding the structure and function of the Sinhala Language and the Literature at large, offers a major intellectual challenge. It offers intellectual literary pursuits. As such, it requires a range of skills and combines many spheres of human activity.

In this context the Department aims to provide:

- degree programmes that offer a high quality learning experience in the field of the Sinhala language and literature under the Semester System with Course units based on Course Credits.
- a range of proper learning opportunities in Pali, Sanskrit, and Tamil studies, in order to improve and broaden the knowledge of Sinhala language.
- opportunities to broaden the knowledge in the field of Classical Sinhala literature and Modern Sinhala literature.
- encouragement to students to develop the knowledge, skills and enthusiasm in literary research, and cultural studies.
- a job-oriented new course of study with regard to the mass-media and mass-communication.
- enhancement of the quality of existing postgraduate degree programme.
- a new course of study (diploma) for the proper written-idiom and spoken- idiom of the Sinhala language.
- encouragement to students to develop a theoretical or practical understanding of drama, fiction, creative writing and appreciation.
- opportunities for students to develop enthusiasm required for lifelong learning of modern and classical literature.
- a healthy atmosphere for students from other Departments of the University to study the structure and function of the Sinhala language and literature, according to their needs.

3.2 Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of any one of these programmes, student should have:

- gained a thorough knowledge and proper understanding of the forms of Sinhala language and literature.
- learnt how the relevant knowledge and understanding could be applied to research and to the needs of the society.

- had ample experience of applying the personal and transferable skills like critical ability, knowledge in the language, literature, culture, drama, fiction, mass-communication and oral and written communication etc. to various situations.
- received a very good knowledge in Classical Sinhala literature and Modern Sinhala literature.
- obtained a knowledge and understanding in the written and spoken idiom of the Sinhala language.

On successful completion of the following specific degree programmes, student should have obtained knowledge and understanding as follows :

- In Sinhala B.A.(Gen.), of the grammar of the Sinhala language, linguistics (Historical and Modern) [under approaches to language] and the history of Sinhala literature, Classical Sinhala prose and verse, Modern literature including drama and dramatics, fiction, poetry, folklore [under the approaches to literature.]
- In Sinhala B.A. (Hons.), of the grammar of the Sinhala language, linguistics, (Historical and Modern linguistics, Socio-linguistics), Sources of language study including Sanskrit language, Inscription and Palaeography, the History of Sinhala literature, Classical Sinhala prose and verse, Modern literature including drama and dramatics, fiction, poetry, folklore, Western and Eastern aesthetics, Sinhalese culture

To help achieve these outcomes, all programmes offer a learning experience that intends to enable students to:

- improve their academic qualifications and skills at entry by progressively developing knowledge and understanding based on a multidisciplinary approach.
- study in various fields within a coherent academic framework and to broaden their experience.
- undertake a final year research project.
- benefit from a curriculum in which the design and teaching are enhanced by the collective efforts of staff and students.
- receive fair and appropriate assessment for progression, and feedback on individual progress.
- have access to adequate academic support and resources.
- interact with staff, who appreciate the importance of learning, within a research environment.
- benefit from an environment that promotes high quality learning.

Programme Details

The following courses fall into the remit of the review

Programme	Duration	Current students
		Numbers
B.A.(Gen.)	3 yrs	722
B.A.(Hons.)	4 yrs.	53
B.A.(Gen.)	3 yrs	1 st year 381
		2 nd year 138
		3 rd year 203
		Total <u>722</u>

Programme	Duration	Current students
		Numbers
B.A (Hons.)	4 yrs.	Part I – 22
		Part II – 19
		Part III – 12
		Total <u>53</u>

Postgraduate Students	MA	3
	MPhil	1
	PhD	3

Students and Staff

Students

The number of Honours Students for the current academic year is shown in the table above. The number of students, who are reading for the B.A. (Gen.) Degree (with Sinhala as a subject) for the current academic year is also shown in the table above.

The number of students of the Dept. of Sinhala under the Semester system from the year 2000 up to this date is given in the tables of Annex I and II.

Details of the results of Final Year students, (B.A. Hons.), are given in Annex III.

The table above also provides the current numbers registered at the Department for Postgraduate studies.

Staff

Academic staff is listed below with their qualifications and designation etc.

Abbreviations:	HOD	-	Head of the Department
	P	-	Professor
	SL	-	Senior Lecturer
	L	-	Lecturer
	PL	-	Probationary Lecturer
	AL	-	Assistant Lecturer
	TAL	-	Temporary Assistant Lecturer
	D	-	Demonstrator
	TT	-	Tutor

Name	Status as at November 2007	Qualifications
Mrs. Angel Kotawalagedara	HoD, SL	B.A.,MA. (Peradeniya)
Ven.. Prof. K. Ananda	P (Chair)	B.A.,M.A.,Ph.D. (Peradeniya)
Prof. P. B. Ekanayake	P	B.A. (Vidyodaya), M.A., Ph.D (J'Pura)
Ven.. Prof. A. Dhamminda	P	B.A, M.A., (Kelaniya), Ph.D. (Varanasi)
Dr. S. Manawadu	SL	B.A., M.A. (Kelaniya),Ph.D. (Ruhuna)Dip.Lib. & Inf. Sc.
Mrs. R.P. Dharmawathie	SL	B.A., M.A. (Ruhuna), DEA Inalco. (Paris)
Mr. P.D. Sugathapala	SL	B.A. (Peradeniya), M.Phil (Ruhuna)
Mr. K. G. Amarasekara	SL	B.A.,M.Phil (Kelaniya)
Mr W. Punchihewa	SL	B.A., M.Phil (Ruhuna)
Mr. J. Amarasinghe	SL	B.A. M.A. (Peradeniya)
Mrs. Sandya Kahandagamage	SL	B.A.(Colombo),M.Phil. (Kelaniya)
Ven.. M. Ariyawansa	L	B.A.(Peradeniya) M.A. (Pune)
Mr. D.P.P.G. Liyanage	PL	B.A. (Peradeniya)
Mr. Dhammika Jayasinghe	PL	B.A. (Peradeniya), Dip. in Translation Studies (Tamil – Sinhala) (Peradeniya)
Mrs. R. A. Renuka	TAL	B.A. (Ruhuna)
Miss M. Rasika Chamindi	D	B.A. (Ruhuna)
Miss Devika Subhashini	TT	B.A. (Ruhuna)
Miss Haseeka Ranganie	TT	B.A. (Ruhuna)

Some members of the Department's academic staff have written a number of valuable books in their chosen field. For instance, Professor of Sinhala (Chair) Ven..Prof. K. Ananda was a winner of the State Literary Awards on two occasions.

Among the other academic achievements of Staff are those of Ven.. M. Ariyawansa who completed his M.A. at the Pune University with Distinction, winning two coveted prizes,

namely Shri K.Y. Kale Prize (First in order at the M.A. Examination in Linguistics) and Prof. S. M. Katre Prize (Languages of South Asia.)

Non-academic Staff

Mrs. G.A. Kusumalatha (Staff Asst.)
Mrs. T. Jayasinghe (Computer App. Asst.)
Mr. N.V. Dharmadasa (Labourer)

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

The present curricula of the Department which cater to BA (General) and BA (Special) students carry several salient features.

- A comprehensive knowledge of the evolution of the Sinhala language is provided through the curricula.
- Works of classical as well as contemporary Sinhala literature have been included among texts.
- Knowledge of linguistics, as applicable to the Sinhala language, is provided.
- Knowledge of Western and Oriental aesthetics is imparted.
- The curriculum has been diversified with the inclusion of subjects such as Sanskrit, Inscriptions and Palaeography, Literature as a Historiography Practice, Communication and Media Studies, Competency in World Literature etc.

Weaknesses and recommendations

- Aims stated in the Department's SER with regard to the commencement of a job-oriented new course of study in mass-media and mass-communication and a diploma course on the proper written-idiom and spoken- idiom of the Sinhala language need to be realized as early as possible.
- Existing measures for curriculum reform need to be expedited.

Level of judgement : SATISFACTORY

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment methods

Strengths

- Availability of well qualified staff, comprising 3 Professors and 8 Senior Lecturers, provides this department with sufficient maturity to conduct postgraduate and undergraduate programmes of study.
- Students are given an understanding of the course content, scheduled lectures, Lecturers-in-charge and references with regard to each course unit at the commencement of the semester through the C1 forms. Such information and planning can be considered as evidence of good practice.
- Regular lecture hours are observed by all Academic Staff and syllabi are covered on time.
- Staff are available for consultation beyond the timetable and are regularly consulted by students engaged in the Final Year Project.
- Academic Staff and Academic Tutors pay sufficient attention to remedying the errors identified in students' exercises during assessments.

Weaknesses and recommendations

- One of the main and urgent requirements of the Department is the increasing of available space. Currently, the available classroom space is minimal and does not allow the comfortable seating of students and staff; congested lecture theaters do not allow proper concentration on studies, hence questions of maintaining quality arise.
- More furniture offering better comfort should be made available for students and staff in the classrooms.
As some classrooms are in semi-darkness, better lighting facilities are required.
- More equipment, eg. computers, multimedia projectors, OHPs must be acquired by the Department in maintaining the quality of teaching and learning. While their use would help improve the presentation skills of students and staff, such use would effectively simulate what the graduates shall be entrusted with in the world of work.
- There is minimal use of Internet facilities and e-resources in the current teaching/learning activities of the Department. The Internet connection available to the Department has been down for a long period and there appears to be little interest in properly maintaining this facility. Since students'/staff's exposure to the wider academic world as well as today's research activities depend on the worldwide web to a great extent, it is recommended that this matter be treated as one of urgent priority.
- Upgrading of collections at the Departmental and the Main Libraries for the benefit of undergraduate and Postgraduate students of the Department is a must. The Review Team is of the opinion that the present collections in these two venues are inadequate, in terms of quality and quantity. An inadequate number of copies can be found of certain works (eg. 'The Old Man and the Sea' and works on Performing Arts) recommended in the curricula and this creates difficulties for students in view of high costs of purchasing and photocopying study material. The Department should regularly seek students' feedback on the availability of texts and liaise with the Main Library in ordering appropriate numbers of publications as well as presently unavailable publications.

- There is less emphasis on Continuous Assessment, the current weightage standing at 80% for the Final Examination and 20% for CA. As CAs serve as a useful tool which enables formative assessment throughout a Semester, it is recommended that it be given greater weightage in future.
- At present, no tutorial classes are conducted by the Department. This is due to the shortage of tutors, venues and appropriate timeslots in the timetable. As tutorial classes help improve students' performance as a formative mechanism, the Department should request the University authorities to assist it in overcoming the current shortages.
- Although research-active and innovative staff are available, the Department does not possess a Language Laboratory. Creating one would be a worthwhile investment for the future, as electronic material is increasingly being used for language studies at most universities.
- In the cases of Final Year as well as Continuous Assessments, there appears to be delayed feedback and this demoralizes students. In order to enable students to improve the quality of their output throughout the Semester, culminating in quality output at the Final Examinations, it is essential that timely feedback be provided. Results of Final Examinations too should be promptly issued so that students would be able to self-assess the level of progression in their performance and improve such performance further.

Level of judgement : GOOD

4.3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievements

Strengths

- The Department receives undergraduate students from the National Intake at entry level. Academic progress achieved by these students, as stipulated in the Department's SER, is significant. Out of 143 Special Degree graduates who passed out from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2006, the Department of Sinhala has produced 16 graduates with Second Class Upper Division Honours.
- Postgraduate and undergraduate students possess sufficient maturity to engage in academic activities. Indicating progression, some of the Department's graduates have commenced postgraduate studies at the Department.
- The Department has recruited its students with superior results as Lecturers, Tutors and Demonstrators.

Weaknesses and recommendations

- The Department points out that the average duration of its graduates waiting for their first job is around 15 months. This situation needs to be analyzed in terms of the curriculum and its relevance to stakeholders, development of soft skills, IT skills etc.

- There is insufficient interest in student publications. Only one annual publication was witnessed and while there is opportunity to develop more publications in print, a wall-magazine that would help enhance students' creative abilities would be welcome.

There appears to be little motivation offered by the Academic Staff for this purpose and other co-curricular activities, and this needs to be remedied through attitudinal change.

- Although the Department is a Department of Sinhala, in keeping with national interests and the requirements of stakeholders in the job market, a well developed programme for students to improve their English knowledge must be put in place. This could be carried out in consultation with the English Language Teaching Unit(ELTU)of the University.

Level of judgement : GOOD

4.4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback

Strengths

- There is evidence of the use of student feedback by the Department and this is considered as evidence of good practice.
- Questions formulated for the purpose are appropriate and measure a range of aspects related to teaching and learning.

Weaknesses and recommendations

- It was observed that the use of student feedback is not regularly carried out in relation to the majority of subjects offered by the Department.
- Some members of the Academic staff are yet to implement this practice.
- Use of regular student feedback in maintaining proper library facilities is also recommended.

Level of judgement : SATISFACTORY

4.5 Postgraduate Studies

Strengths

- The Department offers Postgraduate programmes at Master's and Doctoral levels, which is praiseworthy.
- The Department has on roll 3 students registered for PhD, 1 for MPhil and 3 for MA.
- Possession of research-active Academic staff is an asset that helps to enhance the Department's postgraduate programmes

Weaknesses and recommendations

- There seems to be much inbreeding within the Department in relation to Postgraduate studies. It is recommended that the Department's Postgraduate students be exposed to more external expertise available within the local university system as well as at the international level within split programmes.

- The Department should strive to attract more Postgraduate students from among the first degree holders of other universities; qualitative uplift of the current programmes of study would be required for this purpose.
- The Department currently lacks sufficient reference material useful for research in its Departmental Library. Steps should be taken to equip this facility with up- to- date reference works as well as canonical works.
- Addition of further reference works to the Sinhala collection of the University's Main Library would be required in maintaining quality of postgraduate studies.
- Currently, no foreign scholarships are available for the Department's Academic Staff to pursue their postgraduate studies. While staff should be encouraged to seek such avenues via the UGC and the Internet, assistance of the University administration should be sought in obtaining information relevant to such scholarships.

Level of judgement : GOOD

4.6 Peer Observation

Weaknesses and recommendations

- Currently, there is no evidence of peer observation at the Department. While members of Academic staff are aware of its significance and also of the relevant procedure, no concrete action in this regard has been initiated. It is recommended that the Department initiates action for regular conducting of peer observation by the academic staff of all levels.

Level of judgement : UNSATISFACTORY

4.7 Skills Development

Strengths

- In a limited way, the Department currently seeks to develop skills within its undergraduates. Basic presentation skills have been inculcated within students.

Weaknesses and recommendations

- There is no proper mechanism within the Department to develop the soft skills of undergraduates. Since university education aims to develop well-rounded personalities, it is advised that the Department starts extra and co-curricular activities which would promote teamwork, sharing of views and the development of positive attitudes.
- Presentation skills of students need to be developed further, in the context of the use of electronic material for this purpose in the country at large. Ensuring that good classroom practice would be replicable in the world of work is a must.
- More opportunity should be provided to the Department's students to develop their IT-related skills in terms of more practical hours and a greater number of computers.
- Students' skills related to performing arts as well as oral skills can be developed through extra and co-curricular activities, the conducting of which need an auditorium with modern facilities. At present, staff and students cannot freely access the University

Auditorium for such purposes. Remedial measures must be taken in this regard, particularly by finding alternative accommodation for lectures which are conducted at this venue.

Level of judgement : SATISFACTORY

4.8 Academic Guidance and Counselling

Strengths

- Students have free access to the assistance of the Department's Academic Staff in obtaining redress for their academic and personal grievances.
- Undergraduate students who are engaged in their Final Year research have adequate access to their Academic Supervisors and regular consultation takes place.
- Postgraduate students have been enabled regular consultation in conducting their research.

Weaknesses and recommendations

- More academic guidance for undergraduate students in relation to the choice of a career, postgraduate studies within local and foreign universities would be welcome.

Level of judgement : GOOD

5. CONCLUSIONS

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	Satisfactory
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	Good
Quality of students, including Student Progress and Achievement	Good
The Extent and Use of Student Feedback Qualitative and Quantitative	Satisfactory
Postgraduate Studies	Good
Peer Observation	Unsatisfactory
Skills Development	Satisfactory
Academic Guidance and Counselling	Good

The overall judgment is suspended

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Department appears to be overburdened with the processing of question papers required for End - semester Examinations. Lecturers are responsible for typing, printing and packing of these papers with the assistance of the Department's Non-academic Staff. It is difficult to maintain the confidentiality of examinations within such a context. The Faculty should establish a centralized mechanism which caters to this and other Departments in the processing of question papers for End-semester Examinations.
- Some facilities available to the Academic and the Non-academic staff of the Department need improvement. There is no suitable space for the staff's partaking of meals. Further, the addition of a common room for the use of the Academic Staff would be required. This facility could be equipped with an Internet connection for checking email etc.
- In view of research requirements and e-learning mechanisms, all Academic Staff members must be provided with more computer and Internet facilities.
- Enhanced training opportunities in the form of workshops, seminars and short term training must be made accessible for the Department's junior Academic staff through proper liaison with University authorities and external agencies.

7. ANNEXES

Annex 1. SEMISTER-WISE COURSE UNITS FOR B. A. (GENERAL) DEGREE PROGRAMME - SINHALA

Semester-wise course units for B.A (General) Degree Programme - Sinhala.										
Semester	Course type	Course level	Subject code number	Academic years						
				2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003	2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008
First semester	Foundation core-courses	1000	SLS 1101	382		302	144	231	165	381
	Core-courses	2000	SLS 2101	-		131	128	91	132	97
		3000	SLS 3101				295	129	86	137
	Foundation optional courses	1000	FDN 1103	381			15	23	53	163
	optional courses	2000	SLS 2102				44	22	29	15
			SLS 2103				175	168	165	138
		3000	SLS 3104				335	198	135	203
Second semester	Foundation core-courses	1000	SLS 1201	356		304	147	227	157	
	Core-courses	2000	SLS 2207			292	139	85	134	
		3000	SLS 3203				289	127	87	
	Foundation optional courses	1000	FDN 1202	384		304	94	14	67	
	optional courses	2000	SLS 2204			23				
			SLS 2206			19			8	
			SLS 3202					01		
		3000	SLS 3204							
			SLS 3205							

Annex 2. SEMISTER-WISE COURSE UNITS FOR B. A. (SPECIAL) DEGREE PROGRAMME - SINHALA

Semester-wise course units for B.A (Special) Degree Programme - Sinhala.									
Semester	Course type	Course level	Subject code number	Academic years					
				2001/ 2002 , 2003	2002/ 2004	2003/ 2005	2004/ 2006	2005/ 2007	2006/ 2008
First semester	Core-courses	2000	SLS 2101		18	22	16	22	22
			SLS 2102		18	23	12	21	21
			SLS 2103		-	-	39	29	53
		3000	SLS 3101			18	20	12	19
			SLS 3102			18	20	12	19
			SLS 3103			18	20	12	19
		4000	SLS 4101			-	18	22	12
			SLS 4102			-	25	27	12
			SLS 4103			-	18	21	12
	optional courses	2000	SLS 2104			19	-	10	18
			SLS 2105			-	-	-	-
			SLS 2106			02	11	13	03
		3000	SLS 3104			49	50	54	96
			SLS 3105			04	04	-	-
		4000	SLS 4104			-	14	15	-
			SLS 4105			-	03	03	12
Second semester	Core-courses	2000	SLS 2201		18	21	12	19	
			SLS 2202		18	22	12	19	
			SLS 2203		18	-	12	19	
		3000	SLS 3201			18	22	12	
			SLS 3202			26	22	12	
			SLS 3203			18	21	13	
		4000	SLS 4201			-	18	21	
			SLS 4202			-	18	23	
			SLS 4203			-	18	21	
	optional courses	2000	SLS 2204		09	21	14	13	
			SLS 2205		04	-	-	-	
			SLS 2206		10	-	-	08	
		3000	SLS 3204			-	-	-	
			SLS 3205			18	21	12	
		4000	SLS 4204			-	26	26	
			SLS 4205			-	44	11	

Annex 3. BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE (SPECIAL) – 2006 – RESULTS

	UPPER	LOWER	PASS	
ACL	11	1	-	
BCU	5	-	-	
BPH	3	-	-	
ECN	5	4	7	
GEO	23	-	1	
HIS	2	1	-	
POS	9	3	6	
SLS	16	-	-	
SOC	12	10	9	
STS	3	2	8	
PAL	-	2	-	
	89	23	31	= 143