

# **SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTANCY AND  
FINANCE**



***FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND  
COMMERCE***

***SOUTH UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA***

16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008

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## **1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS**

The subject review evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline as well as the entire programmes offered by an academic department. It is focussed on the quality of the student learning experience and student achievement. It is designed to evaluate the quality of undergraduates.

This report presents the findings of the subject review assessment of the academic standards achieved and the quality of learning opportunities provided in the Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management and Commerce of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka.

This subject review evaluates the quality of education of seven degree programs offering by the Department of Accountancy and Finance, namely Bachelor of Commerce, BBA (Special in Accounting), B.Com (Special in Accounting), BBA (Special in Finance), B.Com (Special in Finance), BBA (Special in MIS), and B.Com (Special in MIS) degree programs.

The review team consisted of Dr. W.G.S. Kelum (University of Sri Jayewardenepura), Mr. D. Jasinghe (Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka) and Mr. Anthony Andrew (Eastern University of Sri Lanka). The team visited the Department of Accountancy and Finance (DAF) during the period from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

The review was conducted adhering to the guidelines provided in the *Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities*, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The review was based on the Self Evaluation Report (SER) submitted by the DAF and supported by the information gathered from the three-day site visit made to the DAF.

The following aspects of education/provision were considered under the review assessment:

- Curriculum design, content and review
- Teaching, learning and assessment methods
- Quality of students, including student progress and achievements
- Extent and use of student feedback
- Postgraduate studies
- Peer observation
- Skills development
- Academic guidance and counselling

Each of the eight aspects was judged as good, satisfactory or unsatisfactory paying attention to the strengths, good practices and weaknesses found in each area. Taking into consideration the judgments given to the eight aspects; an overall judgment was given as confidence, limited confidence or no confidence.

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

The South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) was established in 1995 as a South Eastern University College at Addalaichenai and later in 1996 this was given the status of the National University, and named as the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka. This university was geographically shifted from Addalaichenai to Oluvil site in 1998. Today South Eastern

University of Sri Lanka is one of the fifteen universities of the nation with student population of about 1300.

The mission of the university is to develop high calibre personal of analytical and inquiring mind, leadership qualities, and high ethical and moral values with the ability to face challenges, in a changing environment addressing regional and national needs living harmoniously among divers groups of people.

The vision of the university is to be a Centre of Excellence for creation, enhancement and dissemination of knowledge of national relevance and international recognition and to achieve social harmony among communities.

The university consists of four faculties: Management and Commerce, Arts and Culture, Applied Sciences and Islamic studies & Arabic language.

The Faculty of Management and Commerce (FMC) was established with its academic work at the very beginning with 1992/1993 academic year with four members of the academic staff and thirty one students offering degrees in Business Administration and Commerce. In 1999, the faculty started offering special degrees in Marketing and Accountancy. Final year students of the faculty was trained at Academic program Centre (APC) in Colombo and were given professional training in their special field at private and public organizations.

The FMC has two departments namely Department of Management and Department of Accountancy and Finance. The year 2002 marked a turning point in the history of the FMC. The restructuring plan resulted in the formation of six academic units which function under the two departments, offering six undergraduate degree programs. These units are oriented as service units. All degrees are offered by the FMC and each unit will serve the needs of all the degree programs by offering courses from its functional area. It is intended to convert these units into departments in near future.

The mission of the FMC is to provide a quality education in business studies which blends the best of relevant theory and practice with an innovative approach to teaching, learning and research giving due consideration to the changing environment, the real demands of business world, and the contemporary development needs of the South Eastern Region and the country as a whole.

The vision of the FMC is to emerge as a centre of excellence for dissemination of knowledge through teaching, learning and research of highest quality, relevant and most appropriate to the needs of the individual, the region, the nation and the global community.

To ensure the quality of graduates, FMC has been maintaining linkage with the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura on exchanging of the services of expertise frequently.

The Department of Accountancy and Finance is evolved with the faculty evolution. At the beginning, this department had offered only the B. Com degree program. Now it was expanded with three different units such as Accountancy, Finance and Management Information System (MIS) with ability to offer specialization programs in BBA and B.Com. in Finance, Accountancy and MIS in addition to B.Com. Special Degree program.

DAF was started with two probationary lecturers, now functioning with eight permanent academic staff, two temporary lecturers, one IT instructor and fifteen visiting lecturers.

The mission of the DAF is to produce graduates with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to fulfil the requirements in the filed of Commerce, Accountancy, Finance and Management Information System.

Employing SWOT analysis DAF identified 12 strengths, 7 weaknesses, 2 opportunities and 3 threats to the degree programs offering by the DAF. To address the weaknesses and threats DAF sets its aims, and learning outcomes of the degree programmes.

To achieve the above mentioned mission, DAF is offering seven special degree programs to the students, namely B. Com., BBA (Accounting), B.Com (Accounting), BBA (Finance), B.Com (Finance), BBA (MIS), and B.Com (MIS). These are four year fulltime programs conducted in both Tamil and English medium. Specialization programs on Accounting, Finance and MIS are conducted only in English medium from year three onwards.

The curriculum of the degree programs are designed to provide both theoretical and practical knowledge. First two year students are required to follow the common program, which consists of compulsory 24 subjects. Years are divided in to two semesters and each semester, a student needs to get 18 credits from 6 subjects. From third year, students are allowed to select there specialisation areas. The students who are selected to the B.Com specialisation need to follow 8 compulsory and 2 elective subjects for the third year and 5 compulsory subjects for the year four first semester and 1 compulsory subject and Research Report for the year four second semester. In addition to that, students need to follow the non credit non compulsory practical training program in semester two of the year four. Same structure of subject combinations are followed by the students selected to the BBA or B.Com (Accounting), BBA or B.Com (Finance) and BBA or B.Com (MIS) specialisation programs during year three and four.

Admissions of students to the Department mainly come from two different windows (Management and B.Com) open at UGC. Current annual intake is around 8 students per year directly selected by UGC for B. Com Degree program and 35 students for specialization programs. Following table shows the student numbers admitted to the DAF during last 5 years.

Academic Year	B.Com	Accounting	Finance	MIS	Total
2001 /2002	7	9		11	27
2002 /2003 (Double batch)	18	28		9	55
2003 /2004	7	19	22	22	70
2004/2005	8	28	0	2	38
2005 /2006	5	19	11	0	35

### 3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

According to the SER submitted by the DAF, intends to provide theoretical knowledge and practical experience for students, to perceive a career in Commerce, Accountancy, Finance and MIS.

The aims of the study programmes of the DAF are as follows:

#### 3.1 Aims

The strategic intent of the Accountancy and Finance department is to be a key contributor for the development of the country through creating and disseminating scientific knowledge and providing competent human resources in the fields of Commerce, Accountancy, Finance and

Management Information System etc. To reach this broader aim, the department specifically intends to,

- 3.1.1. Transmit the required knowledge to the undergraduates enabling them to serve in the fields of Commerce, Accountancy, Finance and Management Information System as potential graduates.
- 3.1.2. Offer a range of learning opportunities within the modular teaching structure of the department and the Faculty thereby to develop necessary skills to work in challenging environments
- 3.1.3. Provide a friendly and supportive and responsive learning environment which encourages students to work towards higher achievements of individual learning objectives
- 3.1.4. Ensure a conducive environment for students to develop positive attitudes that help them to employ their potentials socially, friendly manner with the help of acquired broader knowledge and skills during their studies and after the graduation
- 3.1.5. Enhance the professional orientation of undergraduates via having links with professional bodies in the fields of Commerce, Accountancy, Finance and Management Information System so as to meet the necessary requirement of the industry
- 3.1.6. Encourage research in undergraduate levels in national and international context in related fields.
- 3.1.7. Support the academic and other supportive staff in their carrier development including provision of feedback and peer advice
- 3.1.8. Have periodic revisions of teaching, learning and evaluation and so on with the view to be in the line with the changing environment

### **3.2 Learning Outcomes**

**On the completion of the degree program successfully, students should have;**

- 3.2.1. Wider knowledge and conceptual understanding of areas in the fields of Commerce, Accountancy, Finance and Management Information System.
- 3.2.2. Ability to perceive the behaviour of the real business environment of different industry and its consequences on the national economy
- 3.2.3. Learnt the way of searching new knowledge through research
- 3.2.4. Technical and intellectual skills to gather data/information and critically analyze the character and behaviour of marketers and factors determining the value of different business.
- 3.2.5. Developed a range of transferable skills, which are useful in decision making with regard to firm's resource matters such as handling data and interpretation, computer literacy, information management, teamwork, oral and written presentation/communication etc.
- 3.2.6. Built self-confidence for independence, self-motivation for life-long-learning in the field and go for postgraduate studies

**To help to achieve the outcomes in 3.2, the programme offers a learning experience that is intended to enable students to:**

- Explore their academic qualifications and potentials at entry by gradually developing knowledge, skills and understanding, based on a broad and multi-disciplinary approach
- Study a choice of subjects within the faculty in a flexible environment but within a coherent academic framework allowing students to widen as well as to intensify their education.
- Conduct an independent research in the final year from the wide range of subjects offered by the department and on current issues related to the industry.
- Participate in an out door practical component to enhance the knowledge related to experience in the field.
- Nurture the competence of professional report writing
- Cover a convenient and affordable work load within the university guidelines.
- Have a clear understanding on the program objectives, content academic requirements and assessment methods.
- Obtain fair and appropriate assessment for succession and grading and feedback on individual progress.
- Have access to adequate academic support and resources within the university and department.
- Interrelate with staff that are qualified both academic and professional, as well as committed to teaching within a research culture

## **4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM**

### **4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review**

The DAF has provided the curriculum of the Bachelor of Commerce (Special), Bachelor of Business Administration (Special in Accounting), B.Com (Special in Accounting) Bachelor of Business Administration (Special in Finance), B.Com (Special in Finance), Bachelor of Business Administration (Special in MIS), and B.Com(Special in MIS) degree programmes for Self Evaluation (SER). In 1995 DAF offered only B.Com Special Degree and 1999 introduced B.Com (Accounting) B.Com (Finance) and BBA (Accounting) BBA (Finance) special degree programmes. In addition to these programmes, in year 2001/2002 DAF introduced B.Com (MIS) and BBA (MIS) special degree programmes.

Reviewers are of the view that BBA and B.Com specializing degrees offered by the DAF, consist of the same curriculum. There are no special differentiations between the course units offering for BBA Specializing and B.Com Specializing degree programs. Because of this the students can have two different degrees with the same course unit combinations, which make confusions among the employees.

The B.Com and BBA degree programmes under the review, consists of 130 credits and the duration is four years. The four-year period is divided into 8 semesters and students are required to follow the 2-year common programme and 2-year specialization programmes. During the first two years, students are required to follow 24 compulsory course units. Students are allowed to select two optional subjects and 8 compulsory subjects during the third year. First semester of the fourth year students are required to follow 5 compulsory subjects and second semester 1 compulsory subject and 10 credit worth of Research Report. In addition a student can select non credit non compulsory Practical training program for four month duration.

Reviewers are of the view that the non credit practical training component of the degree programmes need to be made compulsory for all the students registered for B.Com and BBA degrees offering by the DAF. At the same time it is important to have at least 2 credits Research Methodology course unit offered to the students before making Research Report compulsory. During the discussion with the DAF academic staff, it was mentioned that at present, the department is offering Research Methodology subject during the second semester of the year three of the degree program as a non credit course.

The contents of the curriculum are structured to achieve intended learning outcomes of the degree programme. The programme and course units are at a suitable academic level and sufficient opportunities are available for students to gain suitable subject knowledge in each of the 7 degree programs offering by the DAF.

Curriculum of the B.Com degree programme consists of 27% of credit for Accounting and Finance course units, 21% of Management related course units, 16% of Mathematics, Statistics, and Economics course units, 12% of IT course units, 8% English, 8% Research or Practical Training, and 8% Other course units.

Curriculum of the BBA (MIS) and B.Com (MIS) degree programmes consists of 31% of credit for IT course units, 19% of Management related course units, 16% of Mathematics, Statistics, and Economics course units, 10% of Accounting and Finance course units, 8% English, 8% Research or Practical Training, and 8% Other course units.

Curriculum of the BBA (Finance) and B.Com (Finance) degree programmes consists of 33 % of credit for Accounting and Finance course units, 19% of Management related course units, 14% of Mathematics, Statistics, and Economics course units, 10% of IT course units, 8% English, 8% Research or Practical Training, and 8% Other course units.

Curriculum of the BBA (Accounting) and B.Com (Accounting) degree programme consists of 31 % of credit for Accounting and Finance course units, 19% of Management related course units, 14% of Mathematics, Statistics, and Economics course units, 12% of IT course units, 8% English, 8% Research or Practical Training, and 8% Other course units.

Considerable number of IT, English and Management course units are available in common programme and the Specialization programs are conducted in English medium from year three onwards.

According to the SER, the curricular has been reviewed almost in every three years time. In recent past three major revisions adapted by the DAF is as follows: During the year 1998/1999 existing curriculum was modified by introducing several new subjects to course syllabus and reducing overlapping by combining some subjects. During the year 2001/2002 DAF further reduced the overlapping of subjects by revising the existing curriculum and introducing some new subjects. It is also evident that the introduction of credit hours and GPA was done during this period. During the same period, DAF introduced new course manuals for students and also the introduction of service units for some subjects like English and IT happened. During the year 2003/2004 introduction of new subject areas such as MIS, Finance and Accounting happened. Reviewers observed that the old and new curriculum of the DAF is almost the same.

To develop the curriculum of the degree programs DAF consulted stakeholders for their feedback. As it is highlighted in the report one of the guiding values of the department is the readiness to listen to its industry and to students and to graduates. Evidence related to the above feedback is not available within the DAF.



One of the strengths and good practices of the DAF was establishing close relationships with other universities of the country. According to the SER, DAF established some linkages with Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Faculty of Management Studies and Finance of University of Colombo, and Department of Economics, University of Peradeniya. It helps the DAF to exchange staff for teaching and assessing work, consultation for curriculum revisions, paper moderations and second marking.

Reviewers have observed that no flexibility is provided for the students to select optional course units. Optional course units are only offered during the year three of the degree program. The Department does not conduct regular tutorial classes for the students.

Reviewers observed that the programme is structured to maintain inter relationships among different subjects within the semester. Even though the introduction of practical training component within the curriculum is recognized as a very important component for the students for their employability after graduation, this issue has not been addressed in a formal way to support students. However, at present the students are facilitated to undergo industrial training for the final year second semester by scheduling lectures on Saturdays and Sundays using Academic program Centre (APC) in Colombo. It is important to encourage all the students to take this course unit as a compulsory course.

Final year research dissertation has been introduced as a compulsory subject for all the students whatever the field they have chosen. This is helpful in developing skills in problem identification, data collection and analysis, critical evaluation and communication. This consists of 10 credits. Reviewers are of the view that it is important to introduce a course in Research Methodology for the students before undertaking the dissertation.

Academic staff members are encouraged to prepare study guides, which are expected to provide guidance to students. The review team has observed some sample lecture material prepared by the academic staff of the DAF for the distribution for the students. Some of this lecture materials are not giving the details of continuous assessments used by the lecturers. Study guides related all subjects are not available within the DAF.

Time tables are prepared only for the lectures and no tutorial and consultation hours are incorporated. During the discussion academic staff explained that tutorials and small group sessions are arranged for the students time to time by informing the students. First three years lectures are conducted during the week days from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. and final year second semester lectures are conducted during weekend by using Colombo based centre and employing visiting lectures from other universities.

Reviewers observed that the DAF offering some very important course units such as Basic Science (1<sup>st</sup> year, 3 credit course), Introduction to Career Guidance (1<sup>st</sup> year, 2 credit course), Management and Entrepreneurial Skills (1<sup>st</sup> year, 3 credit course), Introduction to Social Harmony and Peace Building (2<sup>nd</sup> year, 2 credit course), and Introduction to Tourism (2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3 credit course). During meeting with the students, they were of the view that Basic Science subject is not up to the expected standard and also mentioned that Sinhala Language is more important for them than Basic Science.

DAF is offering 3 credits General English Language Teaching (GELT) - I course unit with 90 hours and 2 credits, 60 hours GELT – II course units in year one, Business English 3 credit

course unit, and Business Communication 3 credit course unit in year two. Students are happy with those subjects and explained that they can improve their skills and knowledge.

Considerable number of lectures and practical classes are held for information technology and computer application related course units. Computer practical classes are conducted to link theory into practice. Facilities have been provided for the students to use computers from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on weekdays. According to the student computer ratio students got enough time to develop IT skills.

*The review team is of the view that the aspect of Curriculum Design, Content and Review would be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'.*

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

The DAF consists of 04 senior lecturers, 02 lecturers, 2 probationary lecturers, 02 temporary assistant lecturers and 01 IT instructor. They are involved in teaching accounting, finance and management information system course units. Teaching of the permanent lecturers are scheduled in all weekdays for first three years and fourth year first semester in the main campus located at Oluvil, and fourth year second semester classes are conducted during Saturdays and Sundays at APC at Colombo. According to the SER, DAF is employing 15 internal service staff from Management Department and 18 visiting staff members to introduce professional orientation high quality of teaching to course units on semester basis. It is better to get professionals for the subjects like Taxation and Auditing.

The objective of the course, learning outcome, detailed syllabus and assessment methods are basically given in the course materials, and the objectives and summary of the course content was given in the faculty hand books. Details of the courses are communicated to the students by the DAF using various methods such as providing the FMC hand books, during the orientation program, and at the first day of each lecture series.

The DAF uses a wide range of teaching and learning methods appropriate to the development of highly competent graduates. The subjects are taught through a combination of lectures, tutorial classes, real case study problems, and various assignments. But the tutorial classes are not incorporated within the normal time tables provided to the reviewers. Students also confirm that they don't have tutorials for practical subjects such as accounting and finance. Respective lecturer has the right to choose the appropriate methods for his teaching. Reviewers observed the active participation of students during the lectures. Except some subjects students' evaluation shows positive comments about the lecturers of the DAF.

According to the SER, department has taken a significant attempt to maintain a better learning environment providing necessary teaching and learning facilities. Reviewers observed that the conditions of the lecturer halls are in appropriate level for lecturing. It is also observed that DAF only having one multimedia projector for all lectures. Students also mentioned that they don't have enough multimedia facilities for the student presentations. To improve the quality of the undergraduate these basic facilities need to be improved by the faculty.

Students are provided with teaching materials which help them to maintain better teaching and learning environment. Encouragement of students' attendance is also highlighted as a part of effective teaching and learning process. But the participation of students in 3<sup>rd</sup> year lecturer is around 50%. It is important to make the lectures interested to the students for

participation. During the first two years, lectures are conducted both in English and Tamil, which help the students to understand the lecturers better.

Computer application and English language are widely used with in the degree programs to improve the English and IT knowledge of the students.

Evaluation of lecturers by the students confirms that the majority of students are satisfied with the teaching. However, students are not satisfied with some lecturers which need to be considered by the DAF. Students confirmed that DAF is conducting course evaluations at the end of each semester by using faculty registrar. It is better to have these course evaluations, conducted in the middle of the semester to see the improvements made by the lecturer.

Subject documentation demonstrates that assessment methods are generally appropriate for measuring the learning outcomes. Individual course units, within subject areas, consist of unique assessment criteria. It is important to make practical type of IT subjects to be tested by practical examination rather than theoretical papers.

As department applies various teaching methods, there are multiple methods of assessments are being used to assess the undergraduates. Department is using two methods of assessments. Continuous assessments are given 20% to 40% marks depending on the subjects and balance 60% to 80% marks are allocated to the end semester examinations. For continuous assessments DAF using mid semester examinations, assignments, field trip reports, classroom discussions and presentations. During the student meeting they explain that the field trips are completely organized by them without the help of department and only in the second year of the degree program.

According to the timetables of the current semester, the number of teaching hours per week allocated to a lecturer varies from 8 to 15 hours per week. It is important to note that all the academics and non academic staff members are marking their attendance every day using the registers provided by the Department.

*Considering the above facts, the aspect of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods is judged as 'GOOD'.*

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

All students are admitted to the FMC, need to follow two year common program and based on their performance students are assigned to the specialised units. From the second year onwards, department commences to teach major subjects in the degree program.

Current annual intake for the B. Com Special Degree is around 8 students per year who are directly sent by the UGC having selected based on their preference and A/L performance.

Current annual intake for specialization programs is around 35 students per year who are willing to specialize based on selection procedures of the faculty specially based on their performance and preference. For the Special Degree Programs in the concentration area of Accounting, Finance, and Management Information System regardless of the medium whether Tamil or English students are selected on the basis of the performance in the first two year common program.

The number of students admitted to the whole programme is less than fifty. Dropouts from the programme are not significant. The DAF provides four attempts to pass at repeat

examinations. According to SER unemployment rate is almost zero. Most recent example of the last past out batch graduates is recruited to the various NGOs and INGOs soon after the final examination. Current prevailing situation of the region made more opportunities to the Accounting, Finance, MIS and Commerce graduates of the university.

The department is keeping continuous attention on student's progress and achievements towards the main learning objectives of the degree program. Care is taken at the induction process to answer their problems. Specially developed indicators are not available to measure the student progress. Students are confirmed that all lecturers are available for consultations any time during the week days.

According to the SER and the available evidence one first class have been awarded to the B. Com degree for last five years and three first classes for Accounting degree, two first classes have been awarded for MIS degree. Classes obtained by the students in B.Com degree programme shows declining trends starting from year 2003. It is important that this factor is to be considered by the DAF.

According to the SER failure rate or the dropout rate of the B.com degree is little bit higher than the Accounting, Finance and MIS. Tables provided under the SER is seems to be not correct and reviewers asked the DAF to present correct revised documents for further analysis.

In addition to the achievements in final examinations results, the students have involved in winning Gold Medal for the best performance, Merit Awards for the best performance of particular subject areas, winning financial scholarship, participating number of athletics achievements, and leadership achievements.

According to the SER department has taken many strategies to maintain student's progress and achievements from the student's selection to their first destination of employments. Following are some significant points, such as offering updated curriculum, providing adequate facilities, organized various skill development programs, applying attractive methods of teaching. Reviewers observed final year students presentations, which is in appropriate level. Reviewers also observed several lecturing and IT practical sessions during the site visit.

Although the members of the staff believe that their students are successful in securing employment after graduation, it was noted that the department does not maintain a record of their output. It is strongly suggested that the department should pay attention to develop a database of their graduates. If possible it is worth to initiate alumni of the department.

*When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Quality of Students, Student Progress and Achievements could be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'*

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

The DAF believes that student feedback is highly influential for the development and sustainability of the degree program in various ways, and therefore adopts various forms and strategies to get the students feedback to the grater extent. According to the SER, DAF adapting following methods to get the student feedback, namely formal questionnaire survey, open door policy, group exercise, through office staff and other informal methods.

The DAF provided a structured questionnaire for lecturers to obtain feedback of students at the end of each semester on nature of the subject delivery, clarity, use of power points, OHP etc. Students ranking is scaled between 1 and 5. This is a compulsory evaluation, done by faculty assistant registrar at the end of the each semester. According to the explanation given

by the staff, the lecturers obtain student feedback relevant to the quality of teaching from the students through informal methods.

Report itself highlights two methods of responds to students feedbacks received by the department. Actions taken to the feedbacks are some times directly communicated to the students or inform through the faculty board meetings. No evidence related to the feed back given to the students.

Other than the formal methods all the staff discuss with the students of their problems at the end of the lectures, during contact hours and other meetings. Also students are free to talk with any staff member at any time of the day.

Reviewers observed that student feedback in most of the course units has not been considered to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

*When the above facts are considered the aspect of the extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative could be judged as ‘GOOD’.*

#### **4.5 Postgraduate Studies**

There is no separate postgraduate programme conducted by the department and the faculty. FMC is going to introduce an MBA program in which the students can specialize in Accounting or Finance. This matter was discussed and approved by the faculty board. The senate of SEUSL has given approval in principle. Evidence related to the approvals is available.

Most of the academic staff members are recently qualified and young. However, none of the senior lecturers are involved in any kind of postgraduate teaching or research supervisions.

All most all the lectures of the Department have either completed the master degree or are studying in master programmes. At present two members of the DAF have obtained PhDs. Few publications related to the two members are available in the faculty journal.

Due to the lack of senior lecturers no research culture was established within the department. Junior lectures are also not encouraged to do research due to less number of staff available in the department.

It is important to establish subject groups to improve the research culture within the department. This helps the department to have some joint publications related to the accounting, finance and MIS.

Facilities are available for each and every lecturer attached to the DAF to develop some research. All the staff members are provided separate rooms with computers and internet connectivity. University library is subscribing to various research journal databases which could be accessed by the lecturers. Good collection of books and other materials are available in the university library. All though the facilities are available at present DAF lecturers are not engaged in research.

*When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Postgraduate Studies could be judged as ‘UNSATISFACTORY’.*

#### 4.6 Peer Observation

The department policy is to do peer-evaluation as far as possible in every aspect of teaching. On the basis of this policy, it is possible to point out certain practices currently the department applying such as, HOD and other department members are mostly observing many teaching activities being in the class room, teachings of probationary lecturers are mostly observed by the senior members, temporary assistant lecturers' works is mostly observed by HOD and other members, teachings of senior lecturers are often observed by a senior staff in this faculty.

The department is practicing peer observation on teaching as it has been useful for the development of the teaching of the staff. However, at the university level, there is no any particular emphasis over that.

At the faculty level, there are certain set instructions over the peer observation of assessment. Apart from that the department also has high emphasis on peer observation even on assessments. In order to maintain a higher degree of accuracy, relevance and standards, peer observation of all assessments events are essential. Followings are the main events. Set papers are moderated, all scripts are marked twice, and mark sheets are observed and get feed back by the Head of the Department (HOD), mark schedules in the examination divisions are observed by the HOD before the final board to ensure the accuracy.

Staff members are supposed to get observed each single set of teaching material by another. Some usual practices are as follows, some times materials are developed together to make the content rich and to increase the quality of figure and diagrams etc.

*When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Peer Observation could be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'.*

#### 4.7 Skills Development

As the degree programs are professional oriented, the DAF attempts to produce competent graduates who can commence professional career soon after the graduation. Hence, students must be given not only the knowledge but also students should be supported to develop skills as well as positive attitudes.

Since the skill development is a major objective of the degree program, the department's overall strategy is to incorporate skills development to the curriculum of the degree programme.

According to the SER, DAF has made attention on deciding different skills that the students must have at the end of the degree program on the basis of following criteria such as, employers' requirements, to equal the quality of graduates with other graduates in the faculty and other universities nationally and internationally, to motivate students' active participation in the degree program, allowing the graduates to be multidisciplinary, balancing theory and practice, and Self learning.

During the visit, it was evident that assignments and presentations have been designed to improve teamwork, communication and presentation skills of the students. IT skills and ability to handle computer software can be improved through the computer related course unit in the curriculum. Language communication skills need to be developed through organizing student activities.

Assignments and presentations have been designed to improve teamwork, communication and presentation skills of the students. Final year project report provides opportunities for the students to develop written and oral communication, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving and report writing skills.

Practical training given to the students would bring immense benefits to the students as this opens exposure to the business environments and to develop related skills. However, curriculum has not included this aspect in a formal manner hence; this has to be regularized in the curriculum. The industrial training of the students needs to be organized with the involvement of the staff by selecting the organizations, co-ordination, and evaluation. Nevertheless, conducting the lectures in the evening for the final year students, as a mean for facilitating the industrial training should be appreciated.

However, communication skills, analytical skills in accounting and financial management, computer skills and managerial skills should be further improved as demanded by the students to meet the industrial needs. It is important to have subject student body to organize skill development programmes with the DAF.

*When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Skill Development could be judged as 'GOOD'.*

#### **4.8 Academic Guidance and Counselling**

University student counselling is in operation and the Faculty has appointed two academic staff members for counselling activities. However, they are from other departments of the Faculty. Discussion with them revealed that their counselling is basically meant for the student orientation programme. In addition, personal timetables of lecturers are not available and not incorporated consultancy hours for the students.

The review team did not see any indication of students contact hours in the time tables of the lecturers. Therefore, it is suggested to set apart student contact hours in the personal time tables. However, according to the explanations given by the staff and students, there are evidences that the staff is ready for supporting the students as the needs arise.

According to the SER there is a combination of university level, faculty level and the department level strategies for academic guidance and counselling for students, such as, providing detailed information of the degree program, examination procedure, facilities etc. during the orientation program. Orientation programs, organized by the faculty, educate students about the faculty and the university level information. At the same time, the department organizes a series of awareness programme for newcomers about the degree program, particular teaching learning and evaluations systems, facilities available, industry links.

Reviewers could not find evidence for academic counselling in operation for the students within the department. According to the students, no academic sub wardens are available in the boy's hostels.

*When the above facts are considered the aspect of the Academic Guidance and Counselling could be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'.*

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

For the purpose of convenient readability, conclusions are presented in statement form as given below under respective headings.

### 5.1 Curriculum Design, Content and Review

#### *Strengths/Good Practices*

- Curriculum of the Degree Programmes consists of more credits in Accounting, Finance, MIS, Commerce and Management course units.
- Considerable number of IT and English course units are available in the program.
- The department conduct the specialization in accounting, finance and MIS degree programs in English medium.
- The degree program consists of an independent research report or project course unit with 10 credits.
- Many specialization areas available for the student's options.
- Credit, GPA and Semester system were adopted.

#### *Weaknesses*

- Content of B.Com / BBA special degree is the same
- Two different degree certificates are offering to the same course content
- The Department does not conduct tutorial classes.
- Practical training offering to the students as non credit non compulsory course unit
- Less options are available to select optional course units
- Research methodology course is not in the curriculum as a credit course unit
- Some professional oriented subjects are taught by non professionals (eg. Taxation)

### 5.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

#### *Strengths/Good Practices*

- Some of the course contents issued by the department provide guidelines for the students to improve their quality.
- Assessment requirements are explained to the students at the beginning of the course units
- According to the timetable, student workload is sufficiently balanced.
- The objective of the course, learning outcome, detailed syllabus and assessment methods are basically given in the course materials, and the objectives and summary of the course content were given in the faculty hand book.
- The DAF uses a wide range of teaching and learning methods appropriate to the development of highly competent graduates.
- The first two years lectures are conducted both in English and Tamil, which help the students to understand the lectures better.



- Attempt to maintain a better learning environment providing necessary teaching and learning facilities.
- Computer application and English language are widely used within the degree programs
- All course units are evaluated by the students at the end of the each semester
- The library usage by the undergraduates is at an acceptable level.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- No special calendar is prepared to balance the distribution of assignments through out the semester.
- Only 20 % or 30% of marks is allocated for the continuous assessment. This is insufficient for practical course units.
- No tutorial classes for the students
- Students are not happy with some of the lecturers teaching
- IT practical type of subjects are assessed based on theory and not in practical manner

### **5.3 Quality of students including student progress and achievement**

#### ***Strengths/Good Practices***

- Programme completion rate, according to the evidence provided by the department, is satisfactory.
- The admission to the academic programs in the department is competitive
- Quality of students admitted to the degree programme is at a high level.
- According to the discussion, reviewers had with the student, they achieve the intended learning outcomes.
- According to SER unemployment rate is almost zero.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- Even though the degree completion rate is high, students have not obtained first classes for some degree programmes.
- The department should pay attention to develop a database of their graduates.
- If possible it is worth to initiate alumni of the department.
- Number of A/L pass students applying for the degree is very less
- Value additions to the students is not adequate

### **5.4 Extent and use of Student Feedback**

#### ***Strengths/Good Practices***

- Adopts various forms and strategies to get the students feedback to the grater extent. According to the SER, DAF adapting following methods to get the student feedback, namely formal questionnaire survey, open door policy, group exercise, through office staff and other informal methods.

- The DAF provided a structured questionnaire for lecturers to obtain feedback of students at the end of the each semester
- Other than the formal methods all the staff discuss with the students of their problems during the lecturers, during contact hours and during other meetings.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- Most of the student feedbacks are not considered for the improvements
- Formal departmental student committees are not available.

### **5.5 Postgraduate Studies**

#### ***Strengths/Good Practices***

- FMC is going to introduce an MBA program in which the students can specialize in Accounting or Finance.
- Almost all lecturers have either completed the master programmes or continuing studies leading to master degrees.
- Two senior lecturers have got PhD
- Accesses of e journals freely available for the DAF lecturers
- All the lecturers are provided computers with internet facilities

#### ***Weaknesses***

- The staffs are not strong enough to commence a post graduate programme.
- No research culture available within the DAF
- Less publications of research articles by the lectures of the DAF for faculty journal
- Internet and e journal facilities are not using for the research purposes
- No research grants are available for the staff members
- Junior lectures are also not encouraged to do research due less number of staff available in the department.
- Subject groups of lectures related to the Accounting, Finance and MIS need to be establish within the DAF

### **5.6 Peer Observation**

#### ***Strengths/Good Practices***

- At present DAF applying certain practices of peer evaluations
- Peer observations cover the areas such as teaching, assessing and teaching materials
- Some evidence is available of the peer observations of lecturers.
- University has developed a common criteria for observing teaching
- Examination papers are set and marked by two independent examiners

#### ***Weaknesses***

- No evidence is found to prove application of peer evaluation teaching and assessing

- No rewarding systems available for the staff who performed well
- Group teaching and core teaching system is not available.

## **5.7 Skills Developments**

### ***Strengths/Good Practices***

- IT centres are opened from 8. 30 a.m. to 4.30p.m.
- Subjects are designed to improve the skills of the undergraduates
- Several English course units are offering to improve the English language abilities of the students
- Several IT course units are offered to the students to improve there IT skills
- Final year research report will enhance the analytical and interpretation skills

### ***Weaknesses***

- Less opportunities for improvement of leadership, teamwork and negotiation skills
- In developing the curriculum employers have not been consulted.
- Student bodies are not available within the department to improve skill-based activities

## **5.8 Academic Guidance and Counselling**

### ***Strengths/Good Practices***

- Some academic members of the department are involved in the university central counselling system
- Career guidance unit of the university provides information related to the career developments of the students.
- Canteen and other facilities like medical, sport and hostels are available for the students.
- Student counsellors appointed by the Faculty are available to guide the student of the Faculty

### ***Weaknesses***

- Student counsellors are not trained for counselling purposes and are limited to the orientation period
- Department students are not receiving effective academic guidance
- As reviewers observed consultation hours are not incorporated in the individual lecturer timetables
- No academic wardens are available during the weekends
- Lecturers of the department are not allocated for the students' guidance.

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

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

*The overall judgment is suspended*

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of weaknesses identified, reviewers would like to make following recommendations in order to improve relevance and quality of the BBA and B.Com degree programmes.

- It is advised to form an industry advisory council for obtaining stakeholders' input for the curriculum revision process. To achieve the objectives of the course unit system it is required to offer optional and auxiliary course units into the curriculum. This ensures the flexibility of the student choice.
- It is very important to be identified proper degree programmes for the department. It is advisable to have only four degree programs namely B. Com Special, BBA (Special in Accounting), BBA (Special in Finance), and BBA (Special in MIS).
- To improve the employability of the graduates of the department, it is advisable to incorporate practical training as a compulsory credit course for the final year second semester.
- To make the professional outcomes of the degree programme, several professional oriented courses need to be delivered by professionals appointing as a visiting lecturers for the department. Especially subjects like Corporate Law, Taxation and Auditing.
- Most of the IT related subjects need to be tested in practical manner using computer practical papers as final examinations.
- It is important to arrange an official calendar for tutorial classes especially for accounting, finance and IT. Also need to encourage students to learn Sinhala language as a compulsory course unit during the year one of the studies.
- It is high time to form a student's subject association to organize extracurricular activities with the objective of widening the rapport between the academic staff and

students. By and large formation of such a student association will definitely improve the skill base of the students and their marketability.

- It is high time to establish research groups within the department. These group members are need to be given the opportunity to develop subjects related to the academic sell. To encourage the staff research it is advisable to have research grant for the faculty.
- It is recommended to have proper filing and database management system established within the department to access important data related to the curriculum revisions as well as current and passed out students of the department.
- It is important to establish alumni association for the department to get their support to develop market oriented degree programmes for the department.
- Formal operative academic counselling system is desirable to enhance real potential of students' advancement. It is better to allow students to select student counsellors who are much closer to them. The present student feedback system needs further improvement to create responsibility among the academic staff under the guidance of the HOD.
- It is recommended to introduce and organize a peer evaluation system under the supervision of the Dean of the Faculty or by employing an eminent academic who is acceptable to the academic staff members of the department
- It is much appropriate to organize the study tours by the HOD of the department and include some staff concern and they should accompany with the students.
- It is recommended to introduce at least 2 credits Research Methodology course unit to the students before making Research Report compulsory
- To improve the quality of the undergraduate, the basic facilities like multimedia facilities need to be improved by the faculty.

## **7. ANNEXURES**

### **Annex 1. AGENDA FOR THE REVIEW VISIT**

#### **Day-01- 16.06.2008 (Monday)**

08.00-09.00	Private Meeting of Review panel with QAA council representatives
09.00-09.30	Discuss agenda for the Visit
09.30-10.30	Department presentation on the self evaluation report at FMCBoard Room
10.30-11.00	Discussion (Working tea)
11.00-11.30	Observing teaching-Lecture ( 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Special in Accounting and Finance, Subject: Financial Reporting)
11.30-12.00	Observing teaching-Lecture (1 <sup>st</sup> Year, Subject: Basic Computer)
12.30-13.30	Lunch at SCR
13.30-14.30	Observing Departmental Facilities.
14.30-15.30	Meeting with Department Academic staff at Board room
15.30-16.30	Observing other facilities (Library, Computer Center, JIM, etc)
16.30-17.30	Brief Meeting of Reviewers

#### **Day -02 – 17.06.2008 (Tuesday)**

08.30-09.00	Observing Teaching- practical class (MIS Lab) ( 3 <sup>rd</sup> Computerized Accounting System)
09.00-09.30	Observing Teaching –Lecture ( 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Financial Accounting-Tamil Medium)
09.30-10.00	Observing Teaching –Lecture ( 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Financial Management-English Medium)
10.00-11.00	Meeting (s) with the vice chancellor /Dean, Head of the Department (Working Tea)
11.00-11.30	Observing Teaching- Lecture ( 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Accounting Special)
11.30-12.30	Meeting with specialization degree students ( 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Year Special)
12.30-13.30	Lunch at River bank
13.30-14.30	Meeting with Undergraduate Students ( 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Students)
14.00-14.30	Observing Students Presentation ( Final Year-MIS special)
14.30-15.00	Observing Teaching – Practical class. (IRQUE Lab) ( 1 <sup>st</sup> Year IT)
15.00-15.30	Observing Documents (working tea)
15.30-16.30	Meeting with Technical staff and other non-Academic staff
16.30-17.30	Meeting of Reviewers.

#### **Day-03 – 18.06.2008 ( Wednesday)**

08.30-09.00	Observing documents
09.00-09.30	Meeting Student counsellors /Academic Advisors/ Proctors.
09.30-10.00	Reviewers private discussion (working tea)
10.00-11.00	Meeting with Head and Staff for reporting (Board room)
11.00-12.30	Lunch at Oluvil Beach

## **Annex 2. LIST OF PERSONS MET**

- Vice Chancellor of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka
- Dean of the Faculty of Management and Commerce
- Head of the Department of Accounting and Finance
- Academic staff of the Department
- Non academic staff of the Department
- Student counsellors
- Academic advisor
- Proctor
- Students (common program / specialization)

## **Annex 3. LIST OF TEACHING SESSIONS OBSERVED**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> year accounting and finance special student lecture (18 students present)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Year Common program lecturer (computer lab) (35 students present)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year computer practical session (30 students present)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Year Tamil medium lecturer (6 students present)
- 2 student presentation final year MIS special

## **Annex 4. LIST OF FACILITIES OBSERVED**

- Department staff member's rooms
- Department Premises
- Faculty Auditorium
- Faculty Lecture halls
- Faculty IT labs
- University Library
- Student canteen
- Student common room
- Senior common room

## **Annex 5. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED**

- Faculty hand book
- Peer evaluation documents
- Student Evocation forms
- Student attendance list and summary
- Lecture time table
- Lecturer Materials
- Faculty journals
- Faculty mints and department meeting mints
- Guideline for the writing and presentation of research
- Council by laws related to the degree