

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

**DEPARTMENT OF
ESTATE MANAGEMENT & VALUATION**



**FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES &
COMMERCE
UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA**

30th October to 01st November 2006

Review Team :

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1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

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

Subject review assessment at the Department of Estate Management & Valuation (EMV) of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (SJP) was conducted following the guidelines provided in the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims and learning outcomes given in the self-evaluation report of the Department.

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

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

The review team visited the department for three days from October 30th to November 01st 2006. The agenda of the three-day visit was discussed with the Head of the Department and amended to suit the ground realities (see Annexure 1). The information related to the above eight aspects were collected by:

- Discussions with the Dean, Head of the Department, members of the academic and non-academic staff (see Annexure 2 for List of persons that attended the meetings) and undergraduate students from 2nd, 3rd and Final year batches (79 in total)
- Peer observation of the teaching process (three lectures and three tutorial/practical sessions were observed – see Annexure 3)
- Observation of the facilities at the Department/Faculty/University (see Annexure 4) and
- Examination of the documents provided by the Department (see Annexure 5).

Each of the eight aspects was judged as good/satisfactory/unsatisfactory, noting the strengths, good practices and weaknesses.

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

In 1956, the then government proposed to establish the Vidyodaya University by bestowing university status to the “Vidyodaya Pirivenas”. The Vidyodaya University and Vidyalandara University Act No 45 of 1958 legislatively established the University at Maligakanda. The University initially had five faculties: Buddhist Studies, Philosophy, Languages, Arts, Ayurveda and Science and twenty two Departments. In 1961 the location of the University was shifted to the current premises with more infrastructure and with an enhanced objective to contribute to the national education. The next cycle of change in the management of higher education came about in 1978 with the Universities Act No 16 of 1978. This restored independent university status and the University was renamed as “University of Sri Jayewardenepura.” Currently, the University consists of five Faculties; Arts, Management Studies and Commerce, Applied Sciences, Medical Sciences and Graduate Studies. These faculties offer BA, B.Sc., B.Com, MBBS, M.Sc, MPhil and PhD degrees as well as various diplomas and certificates through internal and external programs. The mission of the University has been founded upon the tenet "Vijja Uppatam Settha", which means "of things that arise knowledge is the greatest."

The University of Sri Jayewardenepura has been active in management education about four decades since 1968. The Department of Management Studies was given Faculty status in 1972. The Faculty has been growing fast and has been recognized as the “Centre of Excellence in Management Education” in the country. By the year 2000 the Faculty had grown to seven Departments and seven specializations in the form of four-year degrees. In 2001, the Faculty underwent a major restructuring process. The Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC) was expanded to 10 academic Departments and ten degree programs. Annual calendar system was converted into semester system and GPA system was introduced for student evaluation.

The Estate Management and Valuation degree program possesses a strong origin as it was the result of the budget proposal made by the then Minister of Finance, Dr. N M Perera in 1971. Accordingly, the degree program commenced in the University of Colombo in 1972 but was transferred to the SJP in the following year, 1973. The FMCS ran the EMV degree program under the Department of Business Administration until 1986. The Department of Estate Management and Valuation was established in 1986 in the FMSC as a fully-fledged Department to conduct the B.Sc. (Special) Estate Management and Valuation degree program. At present, this is the sole degree program in Sri Lanka that caters to three professions; Real Estate Valuation, Property Management and Urban & Regional Planning (although a new degree program in Town & Country Planning has recently commenced at the University of Moratuwa).

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. Aims

The strategic intent of the EMV Department is to be a key contributor to the development of the country through creating and disseminating scientific knowledge and providing competent human resources for the fields of Real Estate Management, Real Estate Valuation, and Urban & Regional Planning. To reach this broader aim, the Department specifically intends to,

- * Transmit scientific knowledge to the undergraduates enabling them to serve in the fields of Real Estate Valuation, Real Estate Management and Urban & Regional Planning
- * Offer a range of learning opportunities within the modular teaching structure of the Department and the Faculty thereby develop necessary skills to work in challenging environments
- * Ensure a conducive environment for students to develop positive attitudes that help them to employ their potential in a socially friendly manner with the help of acquired broader knowledge and skills during their studies and after graduation
- * Provide a friendly, supportive and enthusiastic learning environment which encourage students to work towards higher achievement of individual learning objectives
- * Enhance the professional orientation of undergraduates via links with professional bodies in the fields of Valuation, Planning, etc, so as to meet the necessary requirement of the industry
- * Encourage research in undergraduate and postgraduate levels, which are recognized by the national and international community
- * Support the academic and other supportive staff in their carrier development including provision of feedback and peer advice
- * Have regular revisions of teaching, learning and evaluation with the view to be in the line with the changing environment

3.2. Learning Outcomes

On the successful completion of the degree program, students should have

- * Gained wider knowledge and conceptual understanding of areas of Real Estate Management and Valuation, Urban and Regional Planning etc.
- * Ability to perceive the behavior of the real estate industry and its consequences on the national economy
- * Technical and intellectual skills to gather data/information and critically analyze the character and behavior of property markets and factors determining the value of different properties and prepare valuation reports
- * Learnt the way of searching for new knowledge and academic excellence through research
- * Developed a range of transferable skills, which are useful in decision making with regard to land resource matters such as handling data and interpretation, computer literacy, information management, teamwork, oral and written presentation/communication etc.
- * Built self-confidence for independence, self-motivation for life-long-learning in the field and go for postgraduate studies
- * Ability to commence professional practice in real estate valuation, management, urban and regional planning, etc.

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Strengths

The review team observed that the curriculum had been revised several times during recent past (1998/99, 2001/02 and 2003/04) with consideration of the views of stakeholders (including employers). The curriculum itself is multi-disciplinary by its nature and aims at producing a generalist who could fit into several related professions. The curriculum also gives high prominence to English (6 credits) and IT (7 credits).

Weaknesses

The team observed that there were no electives available for students. The Self Evaluation Report (SER) states that the primary reason was the lack of human and physical resources at the Department. Nevertheless, we wish to point out that electives and student choice will enhance the learning experience of students.

Another weakness was the lack of credits being awarded to practical components, although these are compulsory (pass/fail) to the degree program. The award of credits to practical sessions will help reduce teacher workload and will be a more productive and fair way to distribute the academic load (credits are given where they are due).

Judgment: GOOD

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Strengths

A wide variety of teaching/learning methods are practiced at EMV. These include, lectures, practicals, laboratory work, field work and field visits outside the University, group work, class presentation and written report.

The fact that the medium of instruction is English, adds value to the degree program. Furthermore, small class size (usually 50 or less) is also advantageous. Additionally, all lecture halls being located in a single building, better facilitates the learning process. A Resource Center is available on premises.

The extensive use of Continuous Assessment (CA) methods is to be commended. This together with the availability of course manuals for most courses (in the Resource Center) facilitates independent learning process.

Weaknesses

Among the weaknesses in the teaching/learning process, it could be mentioned that an over-reliance on visiting staff for certain kinds of teaching input (e.g. practicals) is problematic. Although it is understood that some specialized inputs (e.g. Law) will have to come from experts outside the core competence domain of EMV, the use of Instructors, could partially allay this weakness.

In our discussions with students, it was pointed out that the lack of facilities, especially internet access, constrains the learning process. Together with facilities for duplication/photocopying, this weakness needs to be addressed. We noted that steps are being taken by the Department to address these issues in a planned manner.

Judgment: GOOD

4.3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

Strengths

Students appear motivated, eager to learn and seem pleased that they are in a major metropolitan university and a reputed Faculty of management studies. Their IT/communication skills show progress.

The number of higher level passes (i.e. Classes) is very high (according to the SER, the number of classes awarded approaches 50% in recent batches). Small class size and the specialized nature of the subject matter could be contributory factors.

When questioned as to the academic load (including up to 420 hours of lectures/practicals in the Second Year) students seem to take it in a positive spirit and are enthusiastic about their activities.

This aspect of the EMV program is a strong asset.

Weaknesses

Students stated that there is a lack of time for extra curricular activities, especially in senior years.

Judgment: GOOD

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

Strengths

The EMV Department is to be commended for its extensive use of student feedbacks from most classes (including Visiting/special/guest lectures). Evidence for all teachers being evaluated, was presented.

Another good aspect of the program was the use of a “Suggestions Box.” This helps students approach the authorities with their issues in an anonymous manner.

Discussions with academic and non-academic staff revealed that there are informal and “qualitative” modes of obtaining feedback from students.

Weaknesses

On the negative side, we wish to point that there was little evidence as to the use of feedback to rectify the issues raised by students. While it is a good practice to obtain the teaching/learning feedback from students, it will add greater value if the feedback information is used (and seen to be used) in improving teaching delivery in subsequent rounds.

Judgment: GOOD

4.5. Postgraduate Studies

The EMV Department is at the threshold of embarking upon a Postgraduate (PG) educational enterprise. PG Studies is critical to the generation and dissemination of new knowledge and helps academic staff to stay abreast with current developments in their particular areas of expertise.

The first set of PG programs (M.Sc./PG Diploma in Real Estate Management & Valuation – REMV) has recently been advertised and has attracted over 60 applicants. Selection examinations had been concluded at the time of the site visit and it was

understood that a class of 30 will be selected and instructions will begin the very near future.

Strengths

There was ample evidence that key stakeholders had been consulted in designing the PG curriculum. The course structure allows for greater flexibility (more or less research vs. more or less taught inputs – from 15 taught credits and 5 research credits to 17/3 or even 18/2 credit combinations). Our discussions with the academic staff including the designated PG Coordinator revealed that there are possibilities to expand the scope in future into areas such as corporate real estate and environmental valuation.

Judgment: SATISFACTORY

4.6. Peer Observation

We did not see evidence for direct peer evaluation of teaching process. It was revealed that the small size of the staff body and the specialized nature of the subject matter make it problematic to apply in this context.

Strengths

There are several indirect methods that are currently in use (such as 2nd marking, supervision of external lecturers' teaching input by an internal academic staff member, etc). The examination/moderation procedure too, has in-built checks and balances built into it.

Weaknesses

However, it must be noted that a formal peer observation process will be greatly useful to enhance the learning experience. The SER suggests that much of the “peer observation” responsibility lies with the Head of Department. A formal, documented process like the student feedback system will enhance credibility and be less subject to misuse. It will also greatly enhance the possibility of accurate and timely meeting of the learning objectives of each module / learning activity.

Judgment: SATISFACTORY

4.7. Skills Development

Strengths

On the positive side, the gradual improvement of IT/communication skills of the students is a good sign. The fact that students are exposed to leadership skills, organizational skills and have opportunities to enhance their communication skills augurs well for the future development of the entire study program.

Weaknesses

On the negative side, we wish to mention the need for sufficiently long “industrial” or “practical” training opportunities for senior-level students. This was a request echoed by all three groups of students we interviewed (2nd, 3rd and 4th years). Although we understand the practical difficulties (need to find suitable training places for all students, quality control mechanisms, need to get the blessings of professional bodies associated with the study program, etc), students see a great value in a period of sufficiently long practical training and feel that it would further add value to their degree program.

Judgment: SATISFACTORY

4.8. Academic Guidance and Counselling

University student counseling is in operation and the Faculty has appointed seven academic staff members for counseling activities. However, they are from other Departments of the Faculty. Discussion with them revealed that their counseling is basically meant for the first year students.

Strengths

The FMSC guidance (in terms of a comprehensive and attractively produced student handbook) and the departmental orientation program add value to the academic guidance aspect. All academic staff members have allocated a minimum of 2 hrs per week for student contact/counseling. It was stated that an open door policy is in place for students to express their grievances, if any and seek redress.

Additionally, several members of the staff have some training in counseling and have instituted informal mechanisms to address student issues.

Weaknesses

Perhaps a weakness is the lack of a formal process for academic counseling. This could be in terms of career guidance, industry exposure, course selection, etc. The fact that the study program is highly specialized and many students stated that they had little knowledge of it when entering the program, makes academic counseling highly valuable in this particular instance.

Judgment: GOOD

5. CONCLUSIONS

Curriculum Design, Content and Review:

The curriculum is multi-disciplinary and has been frequently revised, with inputs from industry stakeholders. More student choices in terms of electives and a system of awarding credits for practicals will enhance the status quo.

Judgment: GOOD

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods:

A wide variety of teaching methods are used and environmental factors such as small class size, geographical location, etc, are positive aspects. Additional facilities, especially in terms of enhanced internet access and duplication facilities will enrich the learning experience.

Judgment: GOOD

Quality of Students, Including Student Progress and Achievements:

An enthusiastic and contented student body and good student achievement in terms of grades (classes) is a positive sign. Additional facilitation of extra curricular activities may be useful.

Judgment: GOOD

Extent and use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative:

Extensive use of student feedback of lectures (including outside/special/guest lectures) is a welcome development. However, avenues for the use of such feedback need to be created.

Judgment: GOOD

Postgraduate Studies:

The nascent PG studies program has started on a good footing with inputs from key stakeholders.

Judgment: SATISFACTORY

Peer Observation:

There are informal processes in place, but formal classroom observation by peers will greatly enhance teaching delivery.

Judgment: SATISFACTORY

Skills Development:

Good overall development of communication, leadership, IT skills. This will be greatly enhanced if some form of practical or industrial training is carefully planned and incorporated into the curriculum.

Judgment: SATISFACTORY

Academic Guidance and Counseling:

Formal and informal channels for student counseling are already in place. Initiatives towards academic counseling will greatly enhance student career prospects.

Judgment: GOOD

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

Aspect Reviewed	Judgment Given
Curriculum Design, Content and Review	GOOD
Teaching Learning and Assessment Methods	GOOD
Quality of students including student progress and achievements	GOOD
Extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative	GOOD
Postgraduate studies	SATISFACTORY
Peer observation	SATISFACTORY
Skills development	SATISFACTORY
Academic guidance and counseling	GOOD

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our reading of the SER, discussions with academic/non-academic staff and students and the inspection of supporting documents, we wish to make the following recommendations.

- A period of sufficiently long industrial training be incorporated into the curriculum in a planned manner with adequate quality control mechanisms
- Introduce course electives in senior years so as to add student choices
- Incorporate more management functional areas such as human resources management, marketing, production and operation, finance, etc.
- Increase possibilities for greater interaction between EMV students and the rest of the FMSC students by enhancing common modules in 2nd and perhaps even in 3rd years of study
- At least one student counselor with proper training is to be appointed to advice EMV students

7. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 – AGENDA FOR THE VISIT BY THE REVIEW TEAM

Day 1 – Monday 30th October, 2006

- 08.30 – 09.00 Private Meeting of Review Panel with QAA Council Representatives
- 09.00 – 09.30 Discuss the Agenda for the Visit
- 09.30 – 10.00 Tea
- 10.00 – 11.30 Department Presentation on the Self Evaluation Report
- 11.30 – 12.30 Discussion
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 – 14.00 Observe Teaching (Lecture 01) – Principles of Valuation (EMV II)
Mr. H.M. Premathilake
- 14.00 – 14.45 Observe Other Facilities (Department, Lecture Halls, Computer Centre,
Resource Centre, Stores, Staff Rooms)
- 14.45 – 15.30 Meeting with Academic Staff
- 15.30 – 16.30 Observe Practical (Practical 01) – Building Construction (EMV II)
Mr. P.C Kaluthanthri
- 16.30 – 17.30 Meeting with Undergraduate Students (2nd Year Students)
- 17.30 – 18.30 Brief Meeting of Reviewers

Day 2 – Tuesday 31st October, 2006

- 09.00 – 09.30 Observe Other Facilities (Library, Dean Office, Faculty Computer Centre)
- 09.30 – 10.00 Meeting with Dean and Head of the Department
- 10.00 – 11.00 Observe Documents (Working Tea)
- 11.00 – 12.00 Meeting with Technical Staff and Other Non-Academic Staff
- 12.00 – 12.30 Meeting with Undergraduate Students – (4th Year Students)
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 – 14.00 Observe Teaching (Lecture 02) – GIS (EMV III)
Ms. K.G.P.K. Weerakoon
- 14.00 – 14.30 Observe Students' Presentations (Practical 02) - (EMV IV)
- 14.30 – 15.00 Meeting with Undergraduates (3rd Year Students)
- 15.00 – 15.30 Observe Teaching (Lecture 03) - Applied Valuation (EMV IV)
Mr. P.W Senarathne
- 15.30 – 16.30 Observe Practical (Practical 03) – Practical Class (Surveying & Leveling)
- 16.30 – 17.00 Meeting of Reviewers

Day 3 – Wednesday 01st November, 2006

09.00 – 09.30 Observe Teaching (Lecture 04) - Building Estimation (EMV II)

Mr. J.N. Hettiarachchi

09.30 – 10.00 Observe Practical (Practical 04) -AutoCAD (EMV II) - Mr. J. Herath

10.00 – 10.30 Academic Guidance and Counseling Core Aspect Meeting

10.30 – 11.00 Reviewers Private Discussion

11.00 – 12.00 Meeting with Head and Staff for Reporting

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 17.00 Report Writing

ANNEX 2 – LIST OF PERSONS MET

Members of the Academic Staff

Mr. W Hilary L De Silva, Dean, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce

Mr. R G Ariyawansa, Head, Dept. of EMV

Ms. J Edirisinghe, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of EMV

Ms. K G.P. K Weerakoon, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of EMV

Ms. N C Wickramaarachchi, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of EMV

Mr. H M Premathilake, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of EMV

Mr. J N Hettiarachchi, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of EMV

Mr. P.C Kaluthanthri, Tutor, Dept. of EMV

Mr. A G de Silva, Visiting Instructor, Dept. of EMV

Mr. M W Perera, Visiting Instructor, Dept. of EMV

Mr. S Liyanage, Visiting Instructor, Dept. of EMV

Mr. K V M W Samaranayake, Visiting Instructor, Dept. of EMV

Mr. L A E Perera, Visiting Instructor, Dept. of EMV

Ms. MG Geetha Tharanganie, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of HRM (Student Counsellor)

Mr. NWKDK Dayarathne, Lecturer, Dept. of HRM (Deputy Proctor)

Ms. TL Sajeevanie, Lecturer Probationary, Dept. of HRM (Student Counsellor)

Members of the Non - Academic Staff

Mr. K.A. M. J. Wijetilake, Office Coordinator, Dept. of EMV

Ms M. Ranasinghe, Technical Officer, Dept. of EMV

Mr. M S Perera, Office Assistant, Dept. of EMV

Discussions were also held with 79 students representing second, third and fourth year students.

ANNEX 3 – TEACHING SESSIONS OBSERVED

30th October, 2006

- Lecture 01 – Principles of Valuation (EMV II) - Mr. H.M. Premathilake
Practical 01 – Building Construction (EMV II) - Mr. P.C Kaluthanthri

31st October, 2006

- Lecture 02 - Geographic Information System (EMV III)
- Ms. K.G.P.K. Weerakoon
Practical 02 - EMV IV - Students' Presentations
Lecture 03 - Applied Valuation (EMV IV) - Mr. P.W Senarathne
Practical 03 - Practical Class (Surveying & Leveling)

01st November, 2006

- Lecture 04 - Building Estimation (EMV II) - Mr. J.N. Hettiarachchi
Practical 04 - AutoCAD (EMV II) - Mr. J. Herath

ANNEX 4 – FACILITIES OBSERVED

Department
Lecture Halls
Computer Centre
Resource Centre
Stores
Staff Rooms
Library
Dean's Office and Faculty Computer Centre

ANNEX 5 – LIST OF DOCUMENTS INSPECTED

Institutional Information

- * Strategic Plan, Action Plan, Prospectus, University Year Books, University Calendar, Corporate Plan, List of Registered Students,

Aim(s), Learning Outcomes, Program Details

- * Hand Book, Objectives & Learning Outcomes, Faculty Prospectus

Students, Staff and Facilities

- * Department files, Main Library Book List, Resource Centre, Computer Centre, Practical Equipments, Alumni Association, University Canteen, Hostel, Gymnasium, Staff Training File, Industry Links File

Curriculum Design, Content and Review

- * University Reform Files, Department Progress Files ,Employability File, Valuation Directory, Town & County Planning Directory

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Method

- * Academic Guideline Files, Tutorials, Assignments, Teaching Materials, Handouts,
- * Model Answers, Examiners Feedbacks, Time Tables, Exam Mark Sheets, Exam Bylaws, Student Appeal Files

Quality of Students' Progress and Achievement

- * Result File, Merit Award File, Gold Medal File

Students' Feedback

- * Suggestion Box, Questionnaires,

Postgraduate Study

- * M. Sc. Final Document File, Application List, Paper Advertisement, Comments, Exam Schedule, Budgets, Minutes,

Skills Development of the EMV Students

- * Extra Curriculum Activities, Student Association, Practical Work

Academic Guidance and Counseling

- * UGC Hand Books, Student Hand Book, Website, Student Orientation,
- * Student Contact Program