

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

**DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT**



**FACULTY OF BUSINESS STUDIES
VAVUNIYA CAMPUS
UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA**

19th to 21st March 2007

Review Team :

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Review Team appreciates the excellent working arrangements made by the department during the review visit. The Head of the Department and staff members understand about the importance of the review process. They displayed all the necessary documents to assist the review process and produced further information or documents whenever the Review Team requested for it. The non-academic staff too facilitated our review process. The Team is grateful to all the categories of staff in the department and the Dean of the Faculty for the support given during our visit.

1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Introduction

Universities must conscientiously exercise their responsibility for quality and standards as the higher education is a 'public good' and is of crucial importance for health, wealth and well being of the society and the economy. University accountability for quality and standards is a key factor in promoting and safeguarding public confidence in Sri Lankan higher education.

Subject Review (SR) evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline of the university. It is focused among other things on students learning environment, student progress and achievements, postgraduate studies and academic guidance & counseling.

Subject Review process is introduced by the Committee of Vice- Chancellors & Directors (CVCD) and the University Grants Commission (UGC). At present, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) of the UGC is conducting the subject reviews and institutional reviews in Sri Lankan universities. Prof Colin Peiris, Quality Assurance Specialist of QAAC by a letter of 15th February 2007 requested the following team to perform the SR of the Department of Economics & Management (DEM), Faculty of Business Studies, Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna from 19th to 21st March 2007

- Prof. S.Mohanadas,
- Dr H. M. A. Herath, University of Sri Jayawardenepura,
- Dr. S. M. M. Ismail, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

Key features of the SR process are preparation of Self Evaluation Report (SER) by the department concerned on the subject(s) they teach, SR evaluation by the Review Team on the SER according to the aims & learning outcomes stated therein and submission of SR Report by the Review Team (refer section 1.3 Review judgments and outcomes).

SER of the DEM, Vavuniya Campus prepared in latter part of 2006 was submitted to the members of the Review Team with the letter of 15th February 2007 requesting the Review Team to perform the SR. The SER contained 02 pages of Introduction, 02 pages on Aims, Learning Outcomes & Programme Details, 02 pages on Student, Staff and Facilities, 03 pages on Curriculum, Design & Content, 02 pages on Teaching, Learning & Assessment Methods, 02 pages on Quality of Students, Students' Progress and Achievement, half a page on Use of Students' Feedback, half a page on postgraduate studies and 1.5 page on Peer Observation, Skills Development, Academic Guidance & Counseling and Conclusion. There were 24 pages of Appendix and the total pages are 40.

Review Visit

The Review Team evaluated the quality of education in the DEM according to the aims and learning outcomes as claimed in the SER. The purpose of the visit was to consider and test the evidences provided by the department.

At 8.30 a.m. on 19th March 2007 the Review Team arrived at the DEM of the Vavuniya Campus and met the Head of the department and Dean of the Faculty of Business Studies along with the Quality Assurance Specialist of QAAC. The Review Team was introduced to the staff, and was invited to the Administration Block of the Campus for a welcome meeting by the Dean of the Faculty, Mr. R Nanthakumaran, who was also the Acting

Rector of the Campus as the Rector was out of the Island. The Head of the Dept. of Economics & Management Ms P. Selvarajan was also present at this meeting. Thereafter an agenda for the review visit was finalized. In the morning session of the day Head of the DEM gave a presentation which comprehensively covered all aspects included in the SER and the progress made up-to-date. The review process thereafter progressed by the Review Team according to the agenda.

The Review Team held meetings with the following groups and individuals

- Head of the Department of Economics & Management
- Academic staff members of the department
- Non-academic staff members of the department
- Undergraduates
- Academic Advisors and Student Counselors
- Dean of the Faculty

The Review Team visited the following places of the department/faculty/campus for observation

- Auditorium
- Lecture Halls
- Computer Laboratories
- Library
- Student Common Room
- Department of Economics & Management
- Dean Office

The Review Team went through the following documents

- Degree Programmes & Syllabi of BBA (3 years) and BBM (4 years)
- Degree Programmes & Syllabi of BBM (4 years)- revised
- Scheme of evaluation & award of classes and pass
- Copies of lecture hand-outs
- Copies of tutorials and assignments
- Final year research reports
- Students' feedback
- Reports on peer observation
- Postgraduate supervision
- Minutes of the staff meetings
- Question papers
- Marking schemes
- Mark sheets

Review judgments and outcomes

The Review Team at the end of the 3-day-visit made judgments on each of the eight aspects namely, (1) curriculum review, content and review, (2) teaching, learning and assessment methods, (3) quality of students including student progress and achievements, (4) the extent and use of students' feed back, qualitative and quantitative, (5) postgraduate studies, (6) peer observation (7) skills development, and (8) academic guidance and counseling. On this day stated only whether each of these eight aspects is good or satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

A comprehensive draft Review Report is submitted by the Review Team to the department through QAAC within a month or so after the review visit. This report clearly highlights the strength and good practices found and describe any weakness identified giving evidence to support the above judgments. If any review aspect is found to be unsatisfactory, action should be taken by the department concerned to remedy the problems identified within six months and report accordingly to the QAAC. Finally the Review Report will be published.

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

The Northern Province Affiliated University College (NPAUC) which was commenced in 1992, was elevated as Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna in 1997. The Faculty of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Business Studies are the two Faculties of the Vavuniya Campus.

The Faculty of Business Studies has two Departments, namely (a) The Department of Economics and Management (DEM), and (b) The Department of Accounting and Finance. Under the former NPAUC, students were enrolled for three Diploma programmes:

- (a) Diploma in Accountancy and Finance (Duration: two years).
- (b) Diploma in Mathematics (Duration: two years).
- (c) Diploma in English (Duration: two years).

With the establishment of Vavuniya Campus, the students who have completed the Diploma in Accountancy and Finance were given an opportunity to follow another one year additional curricula in Accountancy and Finance in order to obtain a Degree in Accountancy and Finance. Hence, three batches of Diploma holders of former NPAUC were able obtain Degree in Accountancy and Finance.

In the academic year 1997/98, the first batch of thirty five (35) students were admitted for the three year specialization degree on Bachelor of Business Administration conducted by the Faculty of Business Studies of the Vavuniya Campus of University of Jaffna. The students who studied in Arts, Commerce and Science streams are eligible to seek admission to this degree Programme. However, the most of the students who have been selected were from Commerce stream. Students of three main communities Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslims have been admitted (please see the table 1 below).

Table 01: Student Composition

Intake	Tamils	Sinhalese	Muslims
2002/2003 2002/2003 (A)	18	19	00
2003/2004	38	37	07
2004/2005	30	30	13
2005/2006	28	44	07

The selected students were offered a three year degree with specialization either in Management Studies or Accountancy & Finance. The duration of the degree programme was changed from three years to four years with the UGC approval in 2000. It is important to note that the students are given one of four options:

Option 01: A Certificate could be awarded on successful completion of first year curriculum

Option 02: A Diploma could be awarded for the successful completion of first and second year curriculum

Option 03: Three year General degree in BBM

Option 04: Four year Special Degree in BBM

At present, the following undergraduate degree programmes are offered by the DEM

1. BBM in Marketing Management (Special) Degree
2. BBM in Business Economics (Special) Degree
3. BBM General Degree

The total student population of the Vavuniya campus is three hundred and fifty (350). Hostel facilities have been provided to all the students in the department. At present, there are six permanent academic members and two temporary lecturers in the DEM. There is only one trainee for the department.

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The DEM prepares students for professional careers by providing them with a broad understanding of Marketing, Management, and Economics in combination with a sound knowledge of subjects in related several disciplines. The skill oriented courses in the degree program are to strive developing the students' capacity for independent and critical thinking, logical analysis, effective communication, team work and sound and effective decision making practices.

3.1 Aims

The primary aims and objectives are to provide a broad foundation in the relevant academic discipline, more specifically:

1. To produce high quality employable graduates in the fields of Management, Marketing and Economics to cater to the needs of the market.
2. To provide competitive, broad and innovative academic programmes in a dynamic environment
3. To provide support and assistance to the Business and ultimately to the society at large
4. To produce capable human resources required at the national and the global level

3.2. Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of these degree programs the graduates should be able to:

1. Solve managerial problems, have good communication skills and take effective decisions
2. Develop skills in marketing analysis, research and strategies;
3. Gain and understand the principle, practices and methods in human resources;
4. Understand the concepts, theories and techniques of micro economics required for further studies in economics

5. Understand the applications of the management information system
6. Provide the practical guidance in effective marketing in small businesses
7. Differentiate selling and marketing concepts;
8. Gain competence to undertake research assignments
9. Develop sales management program in different types of marketing
10. Understand information system and its application in marketing
11. Know how to link management strategies in marketing
12. Apply marketing methodologies in service and non profit marketing
13. Gain and develop graduates intellectual, analytical and interpersonal skills.

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

The courses offered by the DEM are of sufficient academic and professional levels. The structure and contents of courses are intended to offer high quality of education and opportunity for students to enhance their skills. Forty five (45) credit courses and six (6) non credit courses are being offered by the department under different disciplines such as main/core courses, electives, co-modules and non- credit courses, inclusive of independent research for each special degree programme in reflecting academic adequacy at the said study programmes. A good understanding of the distribution of different subjects and course modules is important to have an overview appreciation of the curriculum. Students are given an opportunity to follow a two year common program which covers core courses, which will provide a strong foundation in the field.

Students are given the option to select two specialization streams namely marketing management and business economics. Proposing a wide range of subjects in the category of main/core courses, elective, co-modules and non- credit courses, enable the students to acquire and enhance communication, information technology and other skills required to face challenges in the local and global job markets

As there are 15 hours of lectures per week the students are given a reasonable workload and a sufficient time for studies. The programs are conducted in English medium. It was revealed during the discussion with the academics of the Department that the student requests and views of other stakeholders were taken into account in designing the curricula which the review team considered positively.

However, contents of some courses such as BBM-3131 Operations Management, BBM-3132 Entrepreneurship and Small Business, BBM-3231 Project Management have to be revised in order to provide more practical orientation. There is exclusion of important courses namely Management oriented Sociology & Psychology.

It is the view of the Review Team that the Curriculum Design, Content and Review of the DEM can be judged as GOOD.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessments Methods

The application of different teaching methods including formal lecturing, tutorials, group discussions, participation and practical training etc and learning environment together with assessment methods contribute to achieve expected learning outcomes. The continuous assignments such as individual presentations, written assignments, group presentations and unannounced in class examinations are being used to impart knowledge and to develop skills. Also, these teaching and assessment methods encourage student-centered learning, interpersonal skills, and team work which are essential in performing managerial activities in the world of work. The Review Team observed students' active class participation in the class room is good. The unannounced examinations which are conducted by the DEM encourage students in their regular attendance while improving the students' intuition.

In certain subjects such as marketing and management, students are required to visit selected organizations and observe activities performed, to identify the problems faced, and finally to write a case study which should be submitted to the lecturer concerned. The Review Team regarded this practical assignment also contributes highly to increase students' awareness and to develop communication skills, and interpersonal skills. Both, the degree of commitment of the academic staff and the interrelationships between the students and academics are excellent. However, the lack of experienced and qualified lecturers who are involved in research hinders the quality of the students produced by the department.

The DEM has very limited human and physical resources to conduct academic degree programmes. For example, there is only one office room which is shared by all academics including the Head of the DEM and a non-academic member.

Moreover, the Review Team observed the difficulties faced by the academic members of the DEM in particular, lack of office space, lack of individual office room for studies and consultations with students. Though the small library is equipped with some essential books in the discipline, it is not adequately equipped to cater to the current needs of the student population of the department and the faculty. The Faculty of Business Studies has a Computer Centre with sixteen (16) PCs. There were another ten (10) computers with internet facilities. However when a large group wanted to do computer based practical, computer laboratory of the Faculty of Applied Sciences could be used. The Review Team noted that in terms of students access to internet is not adequate. Also Review Team observed that the entire programme is conducted in English Medium and students are highly interested and determined to improve the English Language in following the programme in English Medium.

It is the view of the Review Team that the present Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods of the DEM can be judged as GOOD.

4.3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

Since the entire degree programme is conducted in English Medium subject to the maximum of 50-60 students intake per year, the admission to this degree programme is relatively competitive. The review team noted that there were students who have selected this programme as their first preference.

The table 02 below shows that the rate of completion of the degree programme (except the academic year 1997/1998) is very high.

Table 02: Rate of Completion of the Degree Programme

Year	Rate of Completion
1997/1998	69.2%
1999	90.0%
2000/2001	92.0%
2003	90.0%

The degree of employability of the graduates in this department seems relatively high due to the skills obtained during the four year period including communication skills which is essential in obtaining employment opportunities. It is said that the graduates trained and produced by the DEM since its inception were employed in either private or public sector organizations. However, the detail statistics were not available in terms of employment of graduates of the DEM.

The teaching and assessment methods have been designed in such a way that without attending lectures regularly and without completing given continuous assignments given, students are not in a position to complete the degree programme successfully. That is, both teaching methods and assessment methods directly affect the quality and progress of the students. Thus, the students are encouraged to engage actively and continuously in their studies throughout the programmes.

The Review Team observed that the students who followed their primary and secondary education in either Tamil or Sinhala have made a good progress in improving English Language and communication skills to a reasonable extent. However, the Review Team noted that the students who are very weak in English are not in a position to perform well and to obtain better results and achievements.

It is the view of the Review Team that the Quality of Students including Students' Progress and Achievements in the DEM can be judged as GOOD.

4.4 Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative

Students' feedback is obtained by the DEM at various levels about the quality of education, student learning experiences and the quality of other facilities. It was revealed to the Review Team that the DEM acquire students' feedback qualitatively on discussion with students at several forums such as tutorial & practical classes, Faculty Board meetings where student representatives are present, etc. At these forums student express about the curriculum, course content, learning facilities, industrial training and academic guidance & counseling. At a meeting with students the Review Team found good interaction and articulation of the student to express their view on various issues.

The DEM adopts a method to get the students' feedback quantitatively by using a form (questionnaire) on 'course evaluation by student' which consist of; one page on student participation & course materials and another page on teachers' perspectives. It deal with student punctuality, reading habit of the student, home assignments, students' assessment on the quality of he lesson material and about 10 items on teachers' perspective such as organization of the lecture, communication, teaching methods, stimulation of interest, providing reinforce course materials, punctuality & time keeping of the lecturer, cancellation of lectures, competency of the lecturer in the subject etc. All what a student

has to do is to mark a cross/underline a response of her/his choice out of a 5 scale column in a table having excellent /very good/good/fair/poor. Space is also made available in the form to write any further comments. The Review Team found that the practice of obtaining quantitative feedback is a very recent origin and 04 lecturers made use of this opportunity, once by three staff and twice by another. No analysis is done on the data collected. The team found that attempt to get quantitative students' feedback has been a step forward on the right direction.

It is the view of the Review Team that the Extent and Use of Student Feedback of the DEM can be judged as SATISFACTORY.

4.5 Postgraduate Studies

At present, postgraduate courses are not offered by the DEM due to dearth of qualified senior academics in the department who can teach and supervise postgraduate students in the relevant discipline. There are only two (02) Senior Lecturers, one in Management and the other one in Economics. However these two members are helping other institutions in conducting postgraduate teaching. It is very encouraging to note that there are two members completing their PhD studies; one has already returned to the campus and the other to complete very shortly. Therefore, with the help these two staff and the two senior members could be able to initiate postgraduate studies at least a postgraduate diploma programme in the near future.

It is the view of the Review Team that the involvement of Postgraduate Studies of the DEM is judged as UNSATISFACTORY.

4.6 Peer Observation

The DEM adopts a procedure to observe (review) the lecture of an academic by another member academic of the department on a mutual understanding basis. This is a new development the DEM began to practice since last quarter of 2005. The hand written form (questionnaire) consist of 09 items namely preparation & planning, class management teaching & communication, use of resources, students monitoring, teaching strategy (lecture, testing, revision), sensitivity, functions, learning strategies and overall observation & comment. The reviewer comments on each item. However, there is no organized follow up action or a forum for discussion on the comments made by the reviewer.

The peer observation report has to be obtained for lecturer at least once a semester and the progress has to be monitored. A team can be nominated by the Quality Assurance Unit of the faculty to formally perform the peer observation. Reports on peer observation and students feedback have to be correlated to the staff development programme of the academic staff member concerned. However the Review Team noted that the academic staff members understand the importance of the peer observation and started to practice it.

It is the view of the Review Team hat the present status of the Peer Observation adopted by the members of the academic staff of the DEM is judged as SATISFACTORY.

4.7 Skills Development

At present, the subject related specific skills are provided to the students adequately. But there is room for further improvement. There is a strategy program for skills development as a part of the curriculum. Most of the courses offered by the department are relevant to the courses being followed by the other professional institutions. Mostly, the DEM has introduced continuous assessments and class room presentations for the development of skills aspect.

Students were given the opportunities to learn and practice computer skills and communication skills in following the programme in the English medium. Simply, the purpose is to make them fit to the local and global job markets.

Also, students are trained in report writing and presentations. To enhance and update the quality and capacity of the undergraduates, the DEM is very keen in obtaining the resource persons from other institutions and conducting workshops and discussion periodically.

However, students were of the view that it would be much better if they could obtain practical training outside the university so that they can enhance their employment opportunities in the private sector as well as in the public sector. Also, this would help students to become entrepreneurs if interested.

It is the view of the Review Team that the present status of the Skill Development of the DEM is judged as GOOD.

4.8 Academic Guidance and Counseling

Although the SER deals only with the career guidance under this aspect, the Review Team found evidences that the DEM provide guidance and counseling for all the students in an organized manner. New students on arrival are given orientation programmes where Dean of the Faculty, Head of the Department and Student Counselors address on various aspects of courses, selection of courses, credits & credit requirements, selection of special degree programmes, etc. Guidance on selection of special degree programmes is also given at the end of second year (new batch) and at the end of third year (old batch). The Review Team was revealed that intensive English classes are given during the orientation period as the medium of instruction is English. Students expressed that a clear picture on the delivery of academic programme is provided by the department at the orientation programmes. They also said that all the academic staff are readily available in providing academic guidance to them.

Regarding student counseling there are two Student Counselors appointed to the faculty and students meet them or any member of the academic staff to discuss on personal problems faced by them. Student Counselors in addition allocate time for their availability and students are being informed by placing this information in the notice board. Some of the matters such health problem is discussed by the Student Counselors at various forums and best options are given to the benefit of the students concerned.

Regarding career development, the DEM along with the Dean of the Faculty are guiding and helping the students in whatever possible way to uplift the career development, academically & professionally. Students revealed that their employment opportunity is greater in private sector with good remuneration and working condition. The aspect on academic guidance, counseling and career development became effective because of small student number, 35-50 per batch besides all other inputs. The student contact with teacher and industry is greater in this campus.

It is the view of the Review Team that the Academic Guidance and Counseling adopted by the members of the academic staff of the DEM can be judged as GOOD.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the observations made during the visit by the Review Team and discussed above, 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	Good
Extent and Use of Student feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative	Satisfactory
Postgraduate Studies	Unsatisfactory
Peer Observation	Satisfactory
Skills Development	Good
Academic Guidance and Counselling	Good

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Team would like to make the following recommendations in order to improve the quality of education in the Department of Economics and Management.

- Appointing year level coordinators and subject coordinators could further improve the learning outcomes, the quality of the students and the development of the subject.
- A curriculum development committee/unit needs to be formed initially at the faculty level and then later at the departmental level.
- It is strongly recommended that a practical training programme be introduced
- The views of the students, the industry and all other relevant stakeholders need to be obtained in a formal mechanism in the process of curriculum revision.
- It is recommended to develop the research interests of the academic members and to encourage the academics in research and publications in their fields.
- The data and comments obtained from students' feedback for few academic staff need to be extended to other staff including all visiting faculty and academics engaged in teaching of Computing and English. It is recommended to obtain the student feedback for computer practical classes also.
- It is recommended to analyze the data made available by a survey to give a concise report. Survey need to be extended to one staff one course for two to three semesters to see the progress.
- It is recommended that the peer observation process be formalized; the format of the questionnaire need to be approved by the Faculty Board/Senate and it could be done through a Quality Assurance Unit of the faculty. Peer observation should be

extended to all the staff members including all visiting faculties and be extended to practical classes too.

- Student Counselors need to be trained by Professional Counselors or by staff development programmes to establish much more organized student counseling system in the dept /faculty / campus.