



Program Review Report
Program Reviews – 2018
B. Com (Special) Degree Program
Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce
University of Sri Jayewardenepura
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Dr. H. S. R. Rosairo
Prof. B. Nimalathanan
Dr D. K. Y. Abeywardhana

Quality Assurance Council
University Grants Commission

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Section 1: Brief introduction to the study program

This section provides a brief explanation the study program (SP), its context and its effectiveness in fulfilling the needs of the undergraduates. It also highlights some of its constraints. The Vidyodaya Pirivena which was considered a center of learning for Buddhist monks, has been established in the late 1800's. The University Act No. 45 of 1958 elevated the Vidyodaya Pirivena to university status. The Vidyodaya Pirivena was renamed as the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJP) in 1979 in accordance to the University Act No. 16 of 1978. The USJP is one of the largest universities in the state university system in Sri Lanka and currently operates with seven faculties: Humanities and Social Sciences, Applied Sciences, Management Studies and Commerce, Medical Sciences, Graduate Studies, Engineering and Technology.

The Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC) of the USJP has been established in 1972. The FMSC is regarded as a pioneer in the management education in the country. It currently operates with 12 academic departments. The faculty offers over 250 course units to cater to its 12 bachelor's honors degree programs (Table 1.1). The Department of Commerce (DC) is among the founder departments of the faculty.

The DC at the FMSC has been conducting the degree program under review; Bachelor of Commerce (Special) [B Com (Special)], since the year 1973. The first batch of graduates have passed out in 1977. There have been 41 batches of graduates who have completed this degree to date. There are 4,865 students currently studying at the Faculty of Management and Commerce of which 503 students are following the degree program reviewed (Table 1.2). Students are recruited directly to the B Com (Special) degree program through a separate window from the University Grants Commission (UGC). The degree program is conducted entirely in the English medium. Although the department is housed in a fairly old building, the faculty and the university in general offer students modern facilities and modern technology to facilitate this SP.

Table 1.1: Degree programs offered by the FMSC

Academic department	Degree program
Accounting	B.Sc. Accounting (Special)
Business Administration	B.Sc. Business Administration (Special)
Business Economics	B.Sc. Business Administration (Business Economics) (Special)
Commerce	B. Com. (Special) ¹
Decision Sciences	B.Sc. Operations and Technology Management (Special)
Entrepreneurship	B.Sc. Entrepreneurship (Special)
Estate Management and Valuation	B.Sc. Estate Management and Valuation (Special)
Finance	B.Sc. Finance (Special)
Human Resource Management	B.Sc. Human Resource Management (Special)
Information Technology	B.Sc. Business Information Systems (Special)
Marketing Management	B.Sc. Marketing Management (Special)
Public Administration	B.Sc. Management (Public) (Special)

Table 1.2: Details of student population within the faculty at present and the degree program under review

	Part I Year I	Part II Year II	Part III Year III	Part IV Year IV	Total
Faculty of Management and Commerce	1220	1211	1216	1218	4865
B Com (Special) Program	125	123	128	127	503

The degree program of four academic years comprises of 120 credits. Students are offered common courses offered by the faculty during the first year of the program. A vast majority of the courses in the degree program are compulsory courses and a very few optional courses are offered. Majority of the taught courses of the SP (SP) are offered by the DC while the others are offered by other departments and units of the faculty. Final semester of the program comprises of an independent research project and an internship of six credits each. Both these components are to be completed by the undergraduates while in the industry. These are included to enhance skills and the employability of them.

Around 90 percent of the academic staff of the department possess postgraduate qualifications. However, the proportion of PhD qualified staff is hardly satisfactory. A

¹ The program under this review.

healthy pool of visiting lecturers who are equipped with right postgraduate qualifications and skills is serving the department. In addition, a strong panel of external examiners are serving the degree program for setting and moderation of question papers to enhance the quality of the evaluations.

The faculty is equipped with modern facilities to provide a quality teaching and learning environment coupled with a sound evaluation system. There is no doubt that the SP has been benefitting from these facilities. The library that has around 250,000 books is opened daily between 5.00 am until 10.00 pm. This facility is fully automated and conducts workshops for students and staff throughout the year. It also operates a daily lap-top lending service for students. The library conducts one to one sessions for students to facilitate their learning experience. The computer laboratory, among the largest in the state university system in the country, is well-equipped with over 600 PCs of latest technology, internet facility and various software packages. The faculty has a Learning Management System (LMS) that can aid the academics to upload teaching materials for students.

The faculty provides a range of support services for students. These include an activity room with all resources such as videos etc. for self-learning; a Career Guidance Unit which has a program line-up to help students to shape-up their careers; Business Communications Unit that offers students credited courses related to business communication; Examinations Unit which is web-based, automated and with fully individualized confidentiality; Medical Center that offers medical treatments and psychotherapy; hostel facilities; cafeterias; financial backup scheme for students that is supported by donors; Arts Center; Cultural Center and a well-equipped Sports Center. Academic staff is also supported with a well-defined research grants scheme and a Staff Development Center. The department has been supporting students to enhance their skills through clubs and societies such as Commerce Students' Organization (COMSO) that provide students with opportunities to develop their skills.

Section 2: Review team's observations on the self-evaluation report

The review team was supplied with copies of the self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by the DC for the SP in advance. The Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants Commission (QAC) conducted a pre-visit workshops and the review team members were asked to submit their desk evaluations to be considered at the workshop. It was noteworthy that the scores allocated by team members for the standards under the eight criteria at desk evaluation coincided quite well.

It was noted that the Quality Assurance Committee of the FMSC, Coordinator: Dr. (Mrs).Ayoma Sumanasiri and the writing team has been formally appointed by the relevant department to write the SER for evaluation and the writing tasks have been satisfactorily divided among the writers. Prof.Janaki Edirisinghe - Quality Assurance Coordinator of the university has organized report writing workshops through inviting a Quality Assurance Consultant and senior members from the academic staff of the university.

The SER has been prepared according to the guidelines stipulated in the manual for review of undergraduate SPs of Sri Lankan universities and higher education institutes prepared by the UGC. The SER included four sections and 14 annexes that provided a clear indication and insight into DC's quest to move in to a high-quality SP. The evidence has been presented alongside the standards and criteria in the Appendix of the SER. SER team members were aware of the interpretations and discussions on the criterion assigned. Members of the writing team were of understanding and knowing the file management and coding of the evidences. The SER consisted of four sections (chapters) and 14 annexes and ran through 111 pages. A brief description of the SER is given below.

Section 1 provided a brief introduction to the department and it's SP under review. This section presented the actions taken to eliminate the weaknesses identified by the subject review in 2009. This also presented the graduate profile, expected learning outcomes of the SP and the details of the 11 departments and units contributing to the SP under review. The average student intake during the last seven years since the academic year 2010/2011 was recorded as 130 of which 61 percent was female students. The student community of the SP consisted of a majority of Sinhalese students and a minority of Tamil and Muslim students.

Numbers of academic and other staff were presented in this section. Learning resource systems and student support system were also briefed. A SWOT analysis of the program was included. The strengths identified were that the academic staff was equipped with required qualifications and competencies; a SP of over 45 years of standing; a strong organizational structure adequate for effective management and execution of its core functions; being with a faculty of high demand among the G.C.E. (A/L) students; bright students are enrolled with first preference; strong alumni network; strong links with the industry; motivated staff and students; a curriculum with a wide spectrum of course modules; students being professionally qualified even before graduation making them sought-out for in the job market; and modern and well-staffed IT facilities.

The weaknesses acknowledged were lower profile given to the department being a service department; and the reluctance to undertake a major overhaul in the department. The opportunities emphasized in the SER were demand for the university among G.C.E. A/L students; increasing for graduates from the SP in the job market; escalating foreign investments providing opportunities for graduates in the job market; availability of research funds and grants; and the recognition for the degree in the overseas job markets.

The threats identified in the SER were the severe competition from degrees in management and allied areas in other universities in the country; negative attitude in the country in general about the graduates from state universities; and dissatisfaction in the country about the state university system.

Section 2 of the SER presented an overview of the process of preparing the SER. This included a detailed account on the appointment of a Quality Assurance Cell for the faculty, various committees and a writing team and the allocation of tasks among the several groups of staff for the writing of the SER. Report-writing workshops have been organized by the QA Center, QA Cell of the FMSC with the presence of the external QA consultant.

Section 3 which is the core of the report elaborated on the compliance of the SP with the criteria and standards. It presented information on the compliance of the SP on the eight criteria stipulated. This information on the internalization of best practices and the level of achievements of quality standards, and the presence of documentary evidence and codes of the relevant documents have been presented in tabular format. Assessment of compliance

with the program management (Criterion 1) has been elaborated under 27 standards and the relevant evidence from multiple sources have been presented. According to the report, strategic direction of the SP has been supplied by the university and the FMSC. Policy statements; long-term, medium-term and short-term courses of action; various systems such as student information, student support including the support for differently-abled students and learning management; and program approvals were described as evidence.

The section on Criterion 2, human and physical resources, reflected on the human and physical resources best practices under 12 standards. Staff profiles; details on staff development work; competence of staff; employment procedures and numerous physical assets were elaborated in this section.

The section on Criterion 3, program design and development, elaborated under 24 standards on the SP being consistent with the mission, goals and objectives of the university and the FMSC. It also presented important information about the curriculum development and review process of the SP.

The section on Criterion 4 which is course /module design and development was explained under 19 standards. This highlighted that the development process was participatory. This also explained the alignment among Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) with the course contents, and teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

The section on Criterion 4, teaching and learning, reflected on the best practices adopted through 19 standards. Teaching and learning strategies were identified in the SER to be based on the mission, goals and objectives of the FMSC and also on the learning outcomes of the curriculum. A good blend of research and teaching by academic staff was documented. The SER also elaborated on the procedure for the performance evaluation and promotions of academic staff.

The section on Criterion 6, learning environment, student support and progression, was elaborated through 24 standards. In general, FMSC has been geared to provide a conducive learning environment. Extra-curricular activities such as sports, various societies and student union activities were available according to the SER.

The section on Criterion 7, student assessment and awards, was presented in the SER through 16 standards. Assessment at the SP was highlighted with the continuous assessment and the end-semester examinations. According to the SER all the details regarding the assessments were communicated clearly to all the students at the beginning of the degree program. It also highlighted the punctuality in releasing the results through a fully automated examination system. This also stressed the accuracy and the confidentiality of the system.

The section on Criterion 8, innovative and healthy practices, was dealt with through 14 standards. This section elaborated the policies, practices and processes that augment the quality of the academic program.

A summary has been presented at the end of each of the eight criteria. This made the SER easily readable and understandable. Summaries helped the reader to glance through each criterion rapidly and to get a complete overview about the compliance achieved by the SP with relevant quality standards.

Section 3: A brief description of the review process

Names of the reviewers at the initial stages were Dr. H. S. R. Rosairo from the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Professor B. Nimalathan from the University of Jaffna and Dr. A. M. Perera from the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. However, Dr D. K. Y. Abeywardhana from the University of Kelaniya replaced Dr A. M. Perera at a later stage at the request of the QAC.

The review was for the B Com (Special) degree program administered by the DC, FMSC, and USJP. The review team was provided with copies of the self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by the DC for its SP in advance. The Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants Commission (QAC) conducted a pre-visit workshop. The reviewers performed desk evaluations on the SER well before the site visit. Reviewers submitted their desk evaluations to the QAC at the workshop. It was noteworthy that the scores allocated by team members for the standards under the eight criteria at desk evaluation coincided quite well.

The site visit by the review team was undertaken within a four days period starting from 10th December 2018. The review process commenced with a meeting of the review team with the Vice Chancellor of SJP Senior Professor Sampath Amarathunga. The Vice Chancellor emphasized the importance of establishing a quality culture within the university in general and the steps that have been taken towards instilling such a culture. He mentioned that he and the whole workforce have taken maximum effort to take an institutional approach towards quality within the institution and the commitment to institutionalize a quality culture within the university.

The Dean of FMSC, Dr U. Anura Kumara provided a brief overview to the faculty. He mentioned that the FMSC is currently the highest demanding management faculty in the country. Academic and administrative activities of the FMSC were explained to the review team in the brief presentation by the Dean. He also explained the commitment of the faculty towards quality through aspects such as duration for degree completion, details of graduates completing postgraduate qualifications, graduate employability at the convocation, undergraduate student internship details, research by staff, outreach programs and external engagements, and QA activities within the faculty.

The Head of DC, Senior Professor E. Dayaratne explained the department's quest towards quality in its only SP. He elaborated on the graduate profile of the SP, learning outcomes and the structure of the program, alignments with subject benchmark statements, COMSO, and stakeholder (for example alumni) input towards the enhancement of quality in the SP under review.

The review team met the academic staff which was the driving force of the SP with the view to collect useful data about the department's commitment towards a high-quality SP and best practices through the eight review criteria. The evidence has been presented alongside the standards and criteria in the appendix of the SER report. SER team members were aware of the interpretations and discussions on the assigned criterion. Members of the team were knowledgeable and had a good understanding on file management and coding of evidences.

The meeting with the non-academic staff was able to extract information about their contentment and willingness to contribute towards the quality through various ways. They explained that the faculty has been able to persuade them for commitment and high performance through routine training programs and continuing professional development programs organized by the faculty. They assured their maximum support towards the SP. The technical staff of the faculty were checking of all facilities including the 23 lecture halls for this smooth functioning. Technical staff elaborated the importance of training programs to update and develop their technical skills. The meeting with the administrative staff was attended by the Senior Assistant Registrar - Examinations, Assistant Registrar, Deputy Bursar and Senior Assistant Bursar briefed the review team about the routine practices and processes within the FMSC. They explained about the speedy and confidential examinations and the procedure for timely releasing of results. Senior Assistant Registrar – Examinations of the faculty is a member of the IQAC and the Registrar is a member of the IQAU which are very fitting attachments to enhance and assure the quality within the FMSC.

The meeting with a group of alumni of the SP revealed that they were employed in various capacities by a wide range of employers. Some of them are self-employed or entrepreneurs. They mentioned that the department has been actively getting their input in to the enhancement of quality of the academic program with the view to produce highly employable

graduates. They confirmed that the SP was able to develop important skills in students. The academic staff was taking a student-centered approach in delivering their lectures.

The review team had an informative discussion with a group of students representing all the four years in the degree program. It was a large sample drawn from the student population of the SP. Students were pleased about the formality of the freshers' orientation program conducted by the FMSC. In general, students were pleased about the way the academic program was conducted, student support including English language and IT, existence and availability of societies and sports facilities for them to engage in extra-curricular activities, method of evaluations and timely release of results, and the presence of the hardship fund to assist needy students. Students were pleased about the healthy support they received from the alumni. They were also satisfied with the physical facilities such as the condition of classrooms, sports facilities and the IT lab that were available for them. The department has been providing support for students to acquire professional qualifications such as CIMA during their tenure at the department. Students praised the support provided by the Career Guidance Unit (CGU). The review team had the opportunity to observe a lecture. There were some steps taken towards a student-centered teaching. Further, students were satisfied with the assessment procedure within the department. Students were also pleased with the support provided by the Business Communications Unit which is a unique feature to the FMSC at SJP. They were also provided with a range of facilities in the Activity Room for self-learning.

The review team had the opportunity to meet with the Director – Internal Quality Assurance Unit, Prof Samanthi Senaratne. She made a brief presentation to explain various important steps taken to internalize the quality procedures and to instill the quality aspect within the university/faculty and in its SPs. She confirmed that an experienced QA consultant has been appointed to (1) identify best practices of quality, (2) introduce novel ideas and practices and (3) guide the faculty towards high quality SPs. She mentioned that the student evaluations have been formalized and that the summaries have been given to the Head of DC to be used to benefit mainly the academic staff in their development.

In addition, the review team paid visits to the IT Center, Sports Complex, and the Health Center where modern and very attractive facilities have been provided for the benefits of the students and staff. The review team paid visits to the Examinations Unit as well. It was a modern facility that delivered a commendable service.

Section 4: Overview of the department's approach to quality and standards

The Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) of the USJP has been established in the year 2011 as per the guidelines set by the UGC in 2015. Both the IQAU and the Internal Quality Assurance Cell of FMSC are fully functional with necessary manpower and from their designated offices. The review team expects the IQAC and its office are maintained and continued in future as well. IQAU conducts regular meetings and reports directly to the Vice Chancellor and IQAC of FMSC meets monthly (or more often as and when necessary) to report to the Faculty Board. QA has been an item in the agenda of the FB. An internal quality assurance manual has been developed for the university and was revised in 2017. The SP of B Com (Special) has two academic staff as members in the IQAC of the faculty. The QA aspects discussed at meetings of the department have been channeled to the IQAU through the IQAC of the faculty.

A quality policy has been established and the internal quality aspect has been embedded in the website of the university. A QA consultant has been employed on contractual full-time basis to enhance and guide the internal quality aspect of the whole university and the internalization of the QA activities is prominent. The DC is a member of the Curriculum Revision and Development Committee of the faculty and has been responsible for ensuring that the QA is embedded in to the curriculum. Director / IQAU Prof Samantha Senaratne confirmed that the best practices in QA at SJP will be given a better prominence in the website of SJP for other universities to share.

The FMSC conducts a compulsory one-week orientation program for freshers. An orientation committee is set-up every year to conduct the program smoothly. Representatives from all the departments/SPs of the faculty have been included in this committee. While providing the opportunity for the freshers to meet each other, it also helps them get accustomed in to the new environment they were in. The program included introductions to the faculty and the department, student support and other facilities available for the students, and social activities. This program introduced new students in to service facilities provided by the faculty such as the Business Communications Unit, Legal Studies Unit, IT Resource Center, Examinations Unit, Library, Career Guidance Unit, Student Support Center, Medical Center, Department of Physical Education, Cultural and Religious Associations, and hostel facilities.

It also covered various aspects of living and studying in FMSC. Students endorsed that the program has been done to assist them in their new life and that it has been done to make their journey a known path.

The review team was pleased with the way the staff at the department facilitated the review process providing their fullest cooperation. All the necessary documents were methodically presented both as paper copies and as well as e-copies. A documentation room has been set-up for this purpose. The department adopts a student-friendly academic and administrative environment and technical support systems that ensures a conducive environment for all of its students. All the students are provided with the faculty prospectus and the student orientation program book at the time of registration. They include all the necessary details on the academic program, rules and regulations governing the administration of the academic program, examination and evaluation procedures as well as details of technical support and extracurricular activities. In addition, hand-outs by the service centers such as the Career Guidance Unit including their annual programs and other details are made available for all students. Course guides have been formally prepared for most of the subjects in the SP.

Arrangements have been made to get the services of professionally qualified external moderators and examiners, and to incorporate the independent study and the internship training components in to the degree program. Further, the student evaluation of teachers has been formalized and conducted regularly. However, analysis and summarizing the results of student evaluations should be done regularly and the feedback to be used for staff development activities. These prove a high degree of facilitation and student care by the faculty which is made readily available for the particular SP. Also, these initiatives have the ability to enhance the quality and standard of the SP. The review team feels that the staff of the department has a very positive approach towards quality in the degree program and that they will have the necessary experience to enhance the quality of it in future.

In essence, the review team is of the view that the university, faculty and the department have taken progressive and commendable effort in elevating and maintaining the quality of the degree program to its future.

Section 5: Judgment on the eight criteria of program review

This section presents the judgment of the review team as to the level of attainment of quality under each of the eight criteria of the SP. The review team arrived at these judgments through a careful evaluation of evidence gathered for document review, observations, meetings and discussions held with different individuals and groups listed in Section 3 of the report. The summary of assessment by the review team is given in the Table 6.1 in the Section 6.

5.1 Criterion 1: Program management

The university and the faculty had formal organizational structures in place. Organizational structure is adequate for effective management and execution of its core functions. Therefore, the institutional processes functioned well to achieve goals, objectives and the mission. The strategic plan of the university has been reviewed and updated at regular intervals and the quality concepts have been institutionalized quite well. Procedures offered are duly approved by the Department, Faculty, Senate, Council and UGC. Also, the student information system is very active and efficient. The SP provided information on all necessary by-laws, disciplinary procedures and facilities offered by the program to all students at the commencement of the program through the faculty prospectus made available to all students. This is made available in the website as well.

The strategic plan of the faculty is in alignment with the corporate plan of the university. The strategic plan monitoring committee is established to keep a track on the action plan and on the activities proposed to achieve the objectives and the mission. It was evident that the degree program and the FMSC follow a participatory approach in the governance and management. Stakeholder views were incorporated in to the curriculum development, teaching, learning and assessments. Faculty Board has student representation and the student welfare committee meets regularly to address student welfare issues.

The SP was in the process of developing formats for performance appraisals. However, the performance appraisal system should be raised up to an acceptable level. The SP should initiate its own links, partnerships and collaborations with local and foreign institutions of excellence. Stakeholder feedback should be analyzed regularly and the outputs should be incorporated in to the curriculum development process. Course specifications showed that

timely communication to students. Department obtains anonymous student feedback at the end of each semester which are accessible by the staff. The department ensures the weight to different components of assessments. There was feedback mechanism but, there is no information about the improvements of the lectures. The key strengths of the program and the improvements proposed are as below.

Strengths:

1. Well-established organizational structure is in place within the faculty/university.
2. The program provides information on all necessary by-laws, disciplinary procedures and facilities offered by the program to all students at the commencement of the program. The student information system is very efficient.

Improvements proposed:

1. The SP is in the process of developing formats for performance appraisals. However, the performance appraisal system should be raised up to an acceptable level.
2. The SP should initiate its own links, partnerships and collaborations with local and foreign institutions of excellence.
3. Stakeholder and student feedback should be analyzed regularly and the concepts from the outputs should be incorporated in to the curriculum development process.

5.2 Criterion 2: Human and physical resources

The department possesses academic staff of high caliber with healthy profiles although the numbers don't seem to be adequate. They are trained in teaching and learning and outreach activities. It also has a panel of well qualified (both academically and professionally) visiting staff and external examiners.

The administrative, technical and non-academic staff members serving the department also are very committed. The administration of the faculty and the department and students have been cooperative and able to obtain maximum output from the non-academic staff. Technical staff has been offering an outstanding service towards the upkeep of physical facilities of the department. Classrooms are equipped adequately for smooth functioning of the department.

The fully automated library of the university with a collection of over 250,000 books and ample reading room space for students and staff serves the department as well at its maximum efficiency. The key strengths of the program and the improvements proposed are as below.

Course specifications showed that timely communication to students. Department obtains anonymous student feedback at the end of each semester which are accessible by the staff. The Department ensures the weight to different components of assessments. There was feedback mechanism but, there is no information about the improvements of the lectures.

Strengths:

1. Faculty has well-maintained physical facilities for the benefit of the SP.
2. A well-resourced library is available for the SP.
3. A well-resourced IT facility is in place for the benefit of the staff and students.
4. The activity room set-up for self-learning with all resources such as videos.
5. A well-resourced Information Technology Resource Center (ITRC) with 600 computers is at service for the benefit of students of the faculty.

Improvements proposed:

1. The DC which administers the SP seems to lack academic cadre. SP should overcome the lack of academic staff with academic and professional qualifications through access of cadre.
2. Greater adaptation of outcome-based teaching and learning activities need to be provided.
3. A continuous skill development program for the technical staff should be in place to introduce new technologies to them as the technologies change rapidly at present.

5.3 Criterion 3: Program design and development

A Curriculum Review and Development Committee has been established at faculty level. Stakeholder collaboration has been obtained satisfactorily for curriculum review and development. The graduate profile has been identified for the purpose of framing the ILOs for the development of the SP. Teaching learning strategies, assessments and learning

outcomes are closely aligned. The key strengths of the program and the improvements proposed are as below.

Strengths:

1. Intended Learning Outcomes of the program are realistic.
2. Curriculum has independent study and internship projects which make students more employable.

Improvements proposed:

1. Program should be aligned with the requirements of the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework.
2. Elective course units should be provided to offer students a variety of academic options of their choice.

5.4 Criterion 4: Course / module design and development

B. Com (Special) Degree Program, course design and development were carried out by a course team with the involvement of internal and external subject experts. The evidence provided of complying with SLQF and SBS/ professional bodies; policy and procedures on course design and evidence of course design showing course ILOs aligned with the program ILOs were adequate. University approved standard formats/templates/ guidelines for course/module design and development have been used and complied with during the design and development phases.

There were adequate physical and documentary evidence of the use of ICT during design, development and delivery of courses. The B. Com (Special) Degree Program has established a curriculum revision committee which adopted curricular mapping and constructive alignment in course development format. However, several areas of improvement in future are suggested as follows.

Strengths:

1. Curriculum mapping has been constructively aligned with the course development.

2. Curriculum development committee is in place at the faculty level and the department has representation.

Improvements proposed:

1. Course evaluations should be reported at the department level and should be monitored appropriately by external stakeholders.
2. External examiners feedback should be incorporated in to the course design and development.
3. Moderation of examination papers of technical subjects should be sent for moderation outside the faculty mainly to current practitioners.

5.5. Criterion 5: Teaching and learning

The teaching and learning strategies of the department have been developed based on the program outcomes which have been outlined based on the mission of the FMSC. The DC collaborates with the faculty in the preparation of the semester academic time table and the academic calendar of the faculty. All the students are informed about these via the LMS and other means. The review team was satisfied that the department (and the faculty) works according to these. The department has ensured that the teaching and learning strategies were appropriate for the differently abled students. For example, students with issues with their vision were provided with reading materials and questions papers with large fonts for them to be able to read easily.

A combination of tools such as lectures, presentations, tutorials, assignments, term papers, field studies, in-house seminars and workshops were used to assist students to achieve program objectives. The different teaching techniques are available to develop the learning attributes. Students were provided with printed course guides for number of courses to facilitate their learning experience. The key strengths of the program and the improvements proposed are as below.

Strengths:

1. Student research findings are presented at biannual research forums organized by the department/faculty.

Improvements proposed:

1. Use of Learning Management System should be broad-based to facilitate students' learning experience.
2. Teaching and learning activities should be monitored continuously and discussed at the department level. A forum should be in place to consider students' special requests for participation at significant events outside during term time and examinations.
3. It is best if the department provides course guides (either printed or e-versions) for all the courses offered.

5.6. Criterion 6: Learning environment, student support and progression

The B. Com (Special) Degree Program adequately provides a suitable learning environment that enables the students to successfully achieve ILOs. The review team finds the conditions of the lecture theatres are suitable for effective teaching and learning. The Faculty administrative structure facilitates interaction between students and staff.

The students of the B. Com (Special) Degree Program are clearly conveyed / informed of their rights, responsibilities and conduct for completing the program through by-laws included in the SHB and a students' guide book. The evidence ensures that the student support opportunities are accessible and communicated. However, a survey has not been conducted to identify learning support needs of the students.

The majority of the students, except a very few complete their degree program progressively. The department provide fallback option to the students who cannot complete the degree within the stipulated time. Student disciplinary by-laws are communicated to the students during orientation program and through a guide book.

The department has one permanent student counselor. This seems inadequate to cater to the needs of students. A physical space or a separate unit for students to meet the counselors is not available

at the department premises. The number of permanent counselors with adequate training needs to be increased to handle psychosocial issues faced by the students. In addition to the main library of the university, the faculty has a separate ICT centers with internet facility and access to databases. The faculty does not gather student satisfaction data relevant to student support services and learning support services such as library and ICT facilities. Evidence of appropriate ICT policy was missing and the usage of ICT and library facilities were not monitored on a regular basis.

The faculty has an up-to-date very well-maintained database of students' assessment records. Students' progression is not followed up to give necessary feedback. The Faculty promotes students and staff interactions through extra-curricular activities.

Co-curricular activities such as sport and aesthetic activities conform to the mission of the faculty and contribute to enhance the social and cultural aspects of educational experience of the students. The faculty has an active CGU which provides training on career management and soft skills. The degree program uses different strategies to increase the employability of their graduates. The review team found that the completion level of graduates is good.

The degree program has not done any recent survey on the level of satisfaction of students on support services. The department policy on gender equity and equality is commendable. The department has an active alumnus which contributes to the welfare of needy students and improving employability. The strengths and weaknesses of the learning environment, student support and progression are as follows.

Strengths:

1. Strong and well-defined student orientation program has been organized for the benefit of the new comers.
2. Well-updated examination procedure is in place.
3. The Business Communications Unit of the FMSC that conducts related courses for students during the term time.
4. There are exemptions for a number of courses offered by the department from professional bodies. Also, there is a demand for internship placements from the industry. Students seem capitalizing on these.

Improvements proposed:

1. Regular student satisfaction surveys and analysis of feedback of them should be carried-out. The outputs of such analysis can be incorporated into the staff development.
2. Regular monitoring for student support services should be in position.
3. Designing of a course in academic writing for students to complement their research work during the final year.

5.7 Criterion 7: Student assessment and awards

The departments' procedures for designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing the assessment strategies for B. Com Degree program are well defined. Further, there were adequate evidences of periodical reviews and amendments of assessment strategies and regulations. The degree program adopts policies and regulations governing appointing internal and external examiners. At the very beginning of the semester examiners are appointed and this is a good practice to ensure the quality of the program. Students are assessed using published criteria, regulations, and procedures that are adhered to by the staff and communicated to students at the time of enrollment.

The Faculty adopts marking schemes, however, insufficient proof were available on various forms of internal second marking (open marking, blind marking) and procedures for recording and verifying marks. Staff feedback not collected. Evidence of second marker's reports not available. The strengths and areas to be improved of the student assessment and awards are as follows.

Strengths:

1. Clear examination by-laws are in place and communicated to students.
2. Results are released on time.

Improvements proposed:

1. Better staff awareness on Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework guidelines should be created.

5.8 Criterion 8: Innovative and healthy practices

The review team observed that the faculty has initiated and adopted several innovative practices to support the SP. The examinations results were released according to the academic calendar prepared at the beginning of the academic year. The functions of the Examinations Unit are fully automated. There was no publishing of results as such. All the students are able to obtain their individual and customized results sheet confidentially from a vending machine at the unit. A healthy credit transfer system was in place. The key strengths of the SP and the improvements proposed are as below.

Strengths:

1. A healthy credit transfer system is in practice. Under this scheme, students who were not successful in completing the internal degree were provided with the opportunity to use the credits already acquired to complete the degree on external basis as a fallback option.
2. Clear support policy for differently abled students were implemented.
3. A healthy research and travel grants scheme were offered to staff. In addition, there is a biannual research session organized by the faculty for students and staff to present their research results.
4. A healthy annual research award scheme is made available for academic staff through the University Research Council.

Improvements proposed:

1. Better use of modern techniques such as recordings, videos and interactive links should be introduced in the Learning Management System.
2. Links once established by the department with the universities overseas for exchange programs etc. are not active at present. These have to be restored for the benefit of the SP.

Section 6: Grading of overall performance of the program

Judgments on the eight criteria were given in the Section 5 of this report. Details of performance of the SP based on the eight criteria and the overall performance along with the grading are as below (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Criterion-wise assessments, overall score and the overall grade

Criterion	Number of standards	Weighted minimum score	Maximum score possible	Actual criterion-wise score
Program management	27	75	81	138.89
Human and physical resources	12	50	36	80.55
Program design and development	24	75	72	120.83
Course / module design and development	19	75	57	121.05
Teaching and learning	19	75	57	102.63
Learning environment, student support and progression	24	50	72	83.33
Student assessment and awards	17	75	51	129.41
Innovative and healthy practices	14	25	42	36.90
Total on a thousand scale				813.59
SP score expressed as a percentage				81%
Grading received by the SP				A
Performance descriptor				Very Good

Therefore, it is concluded that the DC has teamed-up with the Faculty of Management and Commerce under the flagship of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura to accomplish a high level of quality expected of a program of study in delivering its degree program; B Com (Special). The review team concludes that the SP should move towards excellence.

Section 7: Commendations and recommendations

The review team was impressed about the practices and processes adopted by the SP in order to deliver a high-quality academic program. There were many commendable features at the SP reviewed. There were also many shortcomings that the team has identified and the team wishes to make some recommendations to improve such aspects. The commendations and recommendations are listed as below.

Commendations

- The department ensures that the degree awarded complies with the guidelines of SLQF.
- The course specifications are published along with the ILOs in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and mindset; teaching learning methods that enable to demonstrate the outcomes.
- The department provides appropriate and adequate infrastructure facilities.
- The department enhances learning opportunities for students by collaborating with industry partners.
- The SP is offering an exit pathway as a fallback option for the students who are not successful as internal students.

Recommendations

- The title of the degree should be aligned with the specifications provided by the SLQF and the Council approval should be sought.
- It is recommended to have records on employability survey and graduate tracer studies.
- Stakeholder feedback and student feedbacks need to be analyzed and show how the findings were included in the improvement.
- Identify appropriate set of indicators for staff appraisal at the university and department levels.
- Improve peer evaluation and teacher evaluation practices and maintain records.
- Introduce award scheme for teaching and non-academic work performances.

- LMS needs to be improved to provide more information and assistance to students.
- Improve adoption of outcome-based teaching and learning activities and provide adequate facilities to practice OBE and SCL approaches.
- Improve office space provided to the academic staff of the DC.
- SP to offer more inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary course units to broaden the outlook and enrich the generic skills of students.
- Appropriate accessibility to differently abled students has to be improved. Special provisions and facilities including a policy developed by the faculty to facilitate them could be done.
- Identification of learning support needs and providing effective learning environment need to be done through need analysis data, student feedback and student satisfaction survey.
- Improve the gender equity activities at department level.

Section 8: Summary

The FMSC that host the SP of B Com (Special) offered by the DC is strategically located in the outskirts of Colombo provides excellent growth opportunities for students. The USJP is a well-established higher educational institute that has an excellent administration and governance that has resulted a healthy organizational structure with efficient procedures and processes in place for staff and students to excel.

A desk evaluation of the SER tendered followed by a site visit by the review team managed to find-out lot of details about the quality of the SP. The SP managed to obtain high marks for all the eight criteria of evaluation. The academic staff administering the SP reviewed, is well qualified, experienced and committed. The administrative, technical and other non-academic staff facilitating the program are very committed. The program management is very good and is aligned with the institution's corporate plan. Physical facilities are well-resourced with state-of-the-art processes. Program design and development were aligned with the ILOs. A curriculum revision and development committee is set up and the curriculum development has been aligned with the mapping. A LMS is in place for teaching and learning. Student orientation program is well organized and formal. Undergraduates are updated at all times about their path towards the degree. Student assessments and releasing of results do not deviate from the calendar. An acceptable fallback option, support for differently abled students, annual research award scheme and research grant scheme were identified as healthy practices adopted by the faculty for the benefit of the SP. Therefore, there are numerous commendable features in place. However, there were several recommendations proposed to further improve the quality of the program.

In conclusion, the DC has teamed-up with the Faculty of Management and Commerce under the flagship of the USJP to accomplish a high level of quality expected of a program of study in delivering its degree program; B Com (Special)

The review team wishes to thank the Vice Chancellor – USJP, Dean – Faculty of Management and Commerce, and Head of DC and all the members of staff for their excellent facilitation of the technical part of the review process, hospitality and support made available during the review process.

Program Review Team

Dr. H. S. R. Rosairo (Chair).

Department of Agribusiness Management,
Faculty of Agricultural Sciences,
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.

Prof. B. Nimalathanan.

Department of Accounting,
Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna.

Dr. D. K. Yapa Abeywardhana.

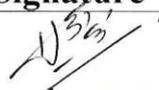
Department of Accountancy,
Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies,
University of Kelaniya.

University : University of Sri Jayawardenepura

Faculty : Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce

Programme : B. Com. (Special) Degree

Review Panel:

Name	Signature
Dr. H. S. R. Rosairo (Chair)	
Prof. B. Nimalathanan	
Dr. Dilrukshi Yapa Abeywardhana	