

# **SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCES AND PUBLIC POLICY**



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO**

24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009

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## 1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Subject review process evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline. It is focused on the student learning experience and on student achievement. It is designed to evaluate the quality of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. However, the responsibility for quality and standards lies within the institution itself, since it alone has the power to control and to change existing practices.

Review process was conducted according to the guidelines given in the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The Department of Economics, University of Colombo submitted a self evaluation report consisting of twelve sections, namely: aims, learning outcomes and programme details; staff, students, and facilities; curriculum design, content and review; teaching, learning and assessment methods; student admission, progress and achievements; the extent and use of student feedback; postgraduate studies; peer observation; skills development; academic guidance and counseling; outreach activities, and areas for improvements . The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims and learning outcomes given in the self evaluation report.

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

1. Curriculum design, content and review.
2. Teaching learning and assessment methods.
3. Quality of students including student progress and achievements.
4. Extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative.
5. Postgraduate studies.
6. Peer observations.
7. Skills development.
8. Academic guidance and counseling.

The review team visited the department from 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2009.

The evaluation of eight aspects was based on:

- Subject review report submitted to the QAA by the Department
- Meetings held with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of Department, academic staff, technical and supportive staff, librarians of the university, senior student counselors, undergraduate and postgraduate students, technical staff of the faculty computer center, coordinators of postgraduate programmes and the counselors of the department.
- Observation of physical facilities of the department, class rooms, computer centers of the faculty and the department.
- Observation of teaching classes of undergraduates and students' presentations.
- Reviewing available documents at the department.

Each of the eight aspects was judged as good / satisfactory / unsatisfactory, based on strengths, good practices and weaknesses in each. Considering the judgment of the eight aspects, an overall judgment was given as confidence / limited confidence / no confidence.

## 2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Political Science and Public Policy has established in the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, in November, 2001. Until then, teaching Political Science was under the Department of History and Political Science, which also taught the subject of International Relations. With a large numbers of students in the three disciplines, it was decided to institutionally separate Political Science from History.

The new name given to the department suggested the focus on combining Political Science with Public Policy as a field of teaching and research.

The Department seeks to achieve its vision through both undergraduate and post-graduate teaching programmes, post-graduate and faculty research, publications and collaborations with other departments in the university as well as institutions of learning and research in Sri Lanka and abroad.

At present, the Department of Political Science and Public Policy concentrates both on undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. The attention on post-graduate teaching and research is a recent development. The new post-graduate programmes include both Masters and Doctoral studies in Political Science. They also serve the capacity building, training and career development objectives of the Department's academic staff.

The Department's Vision is: "Cultivating critical knowledge and capacities for social and political transformation with an emphasis on building democratic citizenship in the country".

### Academic Staff

Following Table provides the details of the academic staff attache to the Department as of October 31, 2008.

|   | <i>Name</i>              | <i>Status as of October 30, 2008</i> | <i>Year of Appointment</i> | <i>Medium of Instruction</i> | <i>Department Responsibilities other than teaching, examination etc,</i> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Dr. Jayadeva Uyangoda    | P<br>HoD                             | December 1981              | S                            | HoD<br>Director, Conflict, Power and Democracy Project                   |
| 2 | Dr. Laksiri Fernando     | P                                    |                            | S                            |  |
| 3 | Dr. S. I. Keethaponcalan | SL II                                |                            | T                            | Academic Coordinator, MAPS   |
| 4 | Dr. M. S. Anees          | SL II                                |                            | T                            |  |
| 5 | Mr. Keerthi Ariyadasa    | SL II                                |                            | S                            | Examinations Coordinator   |
| 6 | Mr. D. G. N. Rambukwella | L                                    |                            | S                            |  |
| 7 | Mr. Dhamma Dissanayake   | SL II                                |                            | S                            |  |
| 8 | Ms. Darshini Silva       | SL II                                |                            | S                            |  |

|    |                             |       |  |   |  |
|----|-----------------------------|-------|--|---|--|
| 9  | Mr. Mahesh Senanayake       | LP    |  | S |  |
| 10 | Mr. Dayan Jayathilaka       | SL II |  | S | On Secondment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| 11 | Ms. Sharmini Rathnam        | TL    |  | T |  |
| 12 | M f. Fawas                  | TL    |  | T |  |
| 13 | Ms. Begum                   | TL    |  | T |  |
| 14 | Ms. Maneesha Ruwanpathirana | TL    |  | S |  |
| 15 | Mr. Sisira Saddhamangala    | TL    |  | S |  |

Abbreviations: HoD – Head of Department, P - Professor, SL – Senior Lecturer, L – Lecturer, LP – Lecturer Probationary, TL – Temporary Lecturer

As the above table indicates, the department has ten permanent members of the teaching staff. Five additional teachers on a temporary are involved in teaching.

### **3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

#### **3.1. Aims**

The department aims to provide:

1. Degree programs aimed at offering high quality learning experience in an environment conducive to critical reflection, independent thinking and commitment to seeking new knowledge, in line with the university policy and guidelines, so as to expose students to recent advances in the knowledge, research and other relevant skills.
2. A range of challenging and interesting opportunities for learning within a structure of module-based learning.
3. Encouragement to students to acquire cognitive abilities as well as skills and capacities in research, writing and intervention to equip them for suitable employment in the public and non-governmental sectors.
4. Learning that will cultivate among students knowledge, awareness and consciousness to be model citizens in a democratic society based on values of pluralism, multiculturalism and tolerance.
5. Interest and enthusiasm among students in life-long learning, including post-graduate learning and research.
6. A responsive, responsible and supportive departmental environment that is conducive to learning as an experience of personal growth through rewarding interactions with teachers and peers.
7. Support for the teaching staff for their career and professional development, including opportunities for post-graduate training for the junior faculty.

### **3.2 Learning Outcomes**

1. Gained knowledge and theoretical understanding in areas within the discipline of Political Science, based on courses that initially provide broad frameworks to be later followed by progressively increasing specialization and in-depth study.
2. Learnt how the knowledge and understanding they acquire can be applied in research, employment and social relations.
3. Developed a range of personal and transferable skills such as critical thinking and analysis, independent inquiry, skills in research and interpretation of data, writing and presentation skills, computer skills, teamwork that will enhance employment opportunities of students.
4. Cultivated humanistic norms and values that are cardinal to democratic citizenship (pluralism, multi-culturalism, social and gender equality, social justice, tolerance, caring for the weak and the vulnerable, non-discrimination).
5. Developed self-confidence and ability to be catalyzers of constructive social, political and institutional change.

**On successful completion of the following specific programmes, students should have obtained knowledge and understanding:**

- In Political Science (General Degree): how politics and political systems work in different settings, how institutional and structural processes of politics and political change occur in different societies, how political ideas and philosophies have shaped and changed the world, dimensions of Sri Lanka, South Asian and global politics, how constitutions and political institutions interact, and the value and working of normative foundations of political life.
- In Political Science (Special Degree): in addition to the above, research and analytical skills, and knowledge in political and social theory relating a range of issues such as comparative politics, gender, conflict and peace, social movements and citizenship, public policy, and social bases of political power.
- In Masters in Political Science: advanced knowledge in conflict, power and democracy from theoretical and comparative perspectives, with the development of capacities among students to draw from and synthesize bodied of international academic literature and research, plus rigorous training in research proposal writing, social research and analysis.
- In Ph. D in Political Science: skills and capacities to make fresh contribution to the existing body of knowledge in a selected area through original research, theoretically informed and rigorous analysis and theory building.
- Each of the above programmes is designed to introduce students to political science analysis and theorizing at an appropriate level, with an exposure to broadly social scientific tenets and norms of inquiry and knowledge production.

**To help achieve the above outcomes, the Department has taken the following innovative steps in order to provide opportunities and space for students as well as teachers:**

- An international tripartite collaboration with the University of Oslo, Norway and the University of Gadjah Mada, Indonesia, to promote and sustain MA and Ph. D programmes in Political Science and research and training programmes for students and the Faculty.
- As a component of the international collaboration, to send MA and Ph D students abroad for Semester Abroad Programmes.

- To create an atmosphere of interaction between undergraduate and post-graduate students, obtaining the service of both MA and Ph. D students as visiting lecturers and guest lecturers in the undergraduate teaching programme.
- Establishing and maintaining a Department Library supported by project funding and with easy access to students.
- Providing Internet access to all teachers and post-graduate students.
- Maintaining a regular weekly Forum where post-graduate students make their presentations leading to discussions of high quality.
- Close collaboration with the Senior Faculty members of other Departments in order to obtain their services and assistance to support the post-graduate teaching and research programmes.

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

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

The department has completed a syllabus review recently through a series of workshops. Following tasks have been done:

- Removing from the curriculum some old courses and introduction of new courses according to the newly identified requirements
- Revisions also have been made to the prevailing courses to update- upgrade the syllabus content
- Solving the content issues among the syllabi such as overlapping
- Making an overall understanding to the department staff on the subjects conducted by individual teacher in order to have organized manner in teaching
- Reviewing the content of each subject such as objectives, outcomes, content and sources
- Re-organizing the assessment process to make examination results realistic.

The Department feels that these syllabus revision workshops have positively influenced the teaching and learning process of the department. It also has its impact positively on a proper assessment of student performance too. The Department follows the general assessment methods introduced by present course unit system of the university.

Concerning the learning outcomes, the syllabuses are distributed among students at the beginning with instructions on objectives, outcomes and assessments and clarifications are made. First hour of teaching when a course begins is used for this purpose. It is understood that students start the course with adequate knowledge on course objectives and the assessment system.

The Department considers students' class attendance as an important aspect of evaluation. Class attendance is built into the scheme of evaluation of the Special Degree classes and other classes with less than 75 students. In this scheme, students 80% or more class attendance during the Semester receive 10% of marks. Those students who do not attend the classes are required to inform the class teacher in writing the reason for non-attendance. Those who provide written explanations of their absence will not be penalized for non-attendance.

The review team observed that the members of the academic staff had participated in the curriculum review process as a team. They have recognized the need of having a regular curriculum review exercise in the department to improve the programme quality in line with the changing intellectual environment. The preparation of a compendium of courses, identifying the course objectives, learning outcomes etc. is one of the positive outcomes of the recent review process. This has encouraged the teachers to prepare teaching materials and lessons guide to the students focusing on the objectives and learning outcomes envisaged for each course. The vision and mission statements of the University of Colombo under its current corporate plan should be common to all departments. Also it should reflect the goals of higher education in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the department of Political Science, University of Colombo should have a vision and mission statements common to the university.

The courses in the department have designed to incorporate core knowledge areas of political science while developing set of new courses to accommodate public policy studies into the department teaching programme. More than twenty (20) courses in the department curriculum have exclusively theoretical and philosophical focus while sixteen (16) courses have comparative groundings, covering such areas as modern constitutions, regional and global politics, ethnicity and nationalism, local governance, political economy and environmental politics.

The public policy component in the department curriculum has seven courses (07) which show that the department has given more weight to the theoretical aspects in politics rather than more practical job oriented aspects lie in the field of politics. It seems that the old notion that identifies “the liberal arts graduate as an all rounder” is the dominant thinking in the syllabi development. It is signified by the emphasis on the development of cognitive abilities and skills and inculcation of democratic civic values signify. The courses which can encourage the students to engage in practical work environment such as the legislative and executive processes (Parliament, Provincial Councils, Cabinet and Presidential Secretariats), local government, election administration, public administration, peace building and development etc. must give a proper balance in the syllabi with the theoretical courses. The Review Team found that some of the courses have repetitive contents (eg. PSC 2240, 3146, ELT 3249, PSC 4188, 4189) thus they could be amalgamated to give space for more public policy courses with practical groundings.

The review team agreed with the feeling expressed by the department that the present workload is too much for the students. The students also demanded that they should be given more free times to absorb the knowledge gained in classes. As explained below the improvement given to the post graduate programme has impacted on the undergraduate programme in a very significant way. Many undergraduates found that the recent changes in the department’s post-graduate programme have influenced them to pursue higher studies. However, the general degree students have a feeling that the department’s course have focused on the needs of special degree and post-graduate students and they were not taken account of when the syllabi is reviewed and re-drafted.

***In relation to the curriculum design, content and review, the judgment of the team is GOOD.***

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

The DPCS consists of 10 permanent and 5 temporary staff members. Out of ten permanent staff 4 are PhD holders. The permanent staffs consist of 2 Professors, 6 Senior Lecturers, 1 Lecturer and 1 Probationary Lecturer. Therefore the department has well qualified and experienced academic staff including two professors. This is a strength and good practice in conducting degree programs and administering a department. The whole degree programme is conducted by the internal members of the departments, where required services of the temporary lecturers are also obtained.

Presently, the department owns several lecture rooms with adequate teaching and learning facilities but in some instances the department share the class room with other departments. Even though the class rooms are consist with necessary equipment for teaching, but inadequate in modern teaching equipment such as projector and sound system. It should be pointed out that the physical environment in these class rooms is satisfactory. Some attention should be focused in the class room for left hand writers and visually handicapped students whose need did not fully addressed. Nevertheless, Degree programme is a broad multi-disciplinary approach which provides the students with comprehensive knowledge in the areas of political science and public policy. Most of them are in theoretical basis of subject, but very poor in job oriented and practical knowledge courses. Reviewer learned from the student meeting that they are very much interested in practical oriented courses especially from general students. But department did not provide such opportunities for their career. There are enough evidences of distributing photo copied material from the secondary sources to the students during study sessions. But, there is lack of self-prepared handouts, study guides or course manuals for the students.

When observing the lecture sessions, reviewers noted that lecture is not pre-prepared and not supported with handouts. Further, the use of multimedia and other teaching aids was also not evident. Students' attendance to the lectures is in a satisfactory level. The particular lecture is delivered in Sinhala medium. The lecture was normally incorporated with the particular part of syllabi. However, the department currently practicing staff centred learning. When starting to deliver the lecture SER team found that the lecturer has no pre-planned and the students were not encouraged to participate in the discussion in the class room.

The review team observed that, at the opening of each semester the lecturer provides the course outline for each course unit for the students indicating learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment methods, list of readings, names of the topics and session breakdowns which could be identified as good practices.

Even though, the aims of the programme is to produce graduates with skill development such as leadership, IT, communication and other transferable skills, the present system successfully addresses these areas and needs continual improvements throughout the programme. More opportunities should be given to the students for developing Language skills and interpersonal skills. On the other hand, the number of field trips and industrial visits is insufficient. Reviewers noted that these aspects should be improved further.

The present evaluation system includes, end semester examination (60%) continues assessments (30%) and attendance (10%). Continues assessment consists of mid term exam and major assignment, etc. As per with the Aims and Learning objectives of the program, the number of hours given to acquire required skills through the continuous assignments seemed

be adequate. These needs are informed to the students at the beginning of the lecture series by the particular lecturer.

During the discussion with students, they emphasize that the time allocation for the assessments for skills development are insufficient. But regarding the class attendance and marks allocated for that purpose, department has given the reason that student should be responsible to attend the class. But students give different perception about the marks given to the attendance, and they do not happy about this system. Therefore the Reviewers advise the department to revise the method.

The moderation of the examination papers is done by senior staff within the Department and answer scripts are evaluated by two examiners. There were sufficient evidences to support that paper marking is methodological. Reviewers observed that there is no evidence of services from the outside of the university in moderating and marking of papers.

The main library of the university provides books, journals and other materials. The collection of texts for referencing found to be adequate. Library is opened at all days of the week which gives more opportunities to the student to use available library facilities. Reviewers also observed that enough reading capacity is available in the library. And also department maintain a separate library funded by a project and providing continues service such as photo copy service, is a good practice of the department to undergraduates and post graduate's students. It will be more beneficial to improve the student capacities.

The department of political science and public policy has provide personal computer for all the staffs with the internet facilities, therefore, it enhance enormous chance to learning and teaching for the staff. Even though the department has not separate computer facilities to students, the faculty have computers to students' access with network and printing facilities during the weekdays.

***In relation to the teaching, learning and assessment methods the judgment of the team is GOOD.***

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

Students enrolled for the Faculty of Arts are selected by the University Grants Commission on the basis of its National Admission Policy. There are no prerequisite for a first year undergraduate to select university level courses in Political Science and Public Policy.

Students for the Special Degree Programmes are selected on the basis of their performance at the first – year - end examination. They are selected through an interview from those who have satisfied the minimum qualification of two 'B' passes for the two Political Science course units offered in the first year. Those students who obtain the best results at the first year examination opt for the Bachelor of education degree offered by the Faculty of Education. These students prefer B.Ed degree to a Political Science one by reason of more opportunities for employment after graduation.

At the end of the course of study, the students are expected to be able to analyze independently the political events and changes which have taken/ are taking place in society. They are required to have presentation skills in diverse political situations. The fourth year students seem to have taken a keen interest in pursuing post – graduate studies.

***In relation to the quality of students, student progress and achievements the judgment of the team is GOOD.***

#### **4.4. Extent and use of Student Feedback**

The department uses meetings opportunities available within the present course unit system such as dissertation supervision, Mid Term Presentations and Discussion classes to meet the students regularly. These regular occasions are used to receive student feed backs. Another method used by the teachers was asking students to send unanimous notes regarding the teaching methods adopted during the class room sessions and the subject content of the lecture. Further the department has a Mentoring programme under which teachers have been assigned a group of students for counseling and receiving feedback.

The Review team found that the department does not have a proper and formally adopted system of student feedback. Since the teachers have a very good rapport with the students the department can introduce a formal system for student feed backs. The notes collected by the teachers during study sessions show that the students have the maturity to participate constructively in such a system.

***In relation to the extent and use of student feedback the judgment of the team is GOOD.***

#### **4.5. Postgraduate Studies**

The Department has a strong post-graduate programme. The new M.A. programme which consisted of taught course and research component has been introduced in 2008 by the Department by replacing the existing traditional M.A. Programme. Presently there are twenty one M.A. students and ten Ph.D. candidates. Five Ph D holders being the members of the department is a clear indication that the department has a strong academic capability to run this type of post-graduate programme. Post-graduate programme can be considered as an university staff development programme. Because six university lecturers are involving with the Ph D programme while one university lecturer is following the M.A. programme.

The both the M.A. and Ph D programmes are conducted with the collaboration of the university of Oslo in Sweden and another University in Indonesia. This provides a good opportunity to Sri Lankan post-graduate students to obtain a foreign exposure. The department was able to provide some facilities to under-graduate and post-graduate candidates from foreign and local financial funds received for the post-graduate programme. The librarian who looks after the department library is paid by the post-graduate funds. This programme helps to create a research culture in the department. The department has obtained some Ph D candidates' services to the under-graduates' programme by offering a few teaching assistantships. There were no administrative problems due to handling the all administrative affairs by the department.

However, reviewers found some weakness also in the programme through the process of discussions with post-graduate candidates and the non-academic staff. Though some of the

candidates have been registered for the Ph D programme a year before, they were not given clear and strict time table to submit their research proposals and to complete their works. This might badly affect the continuation of the Ph.D. studies. The delaying of visiting lecturers' payments and the procurement process which noticed by the reviewers are mainly due to bureaucratic red tapes prevailed in the University. The reviewers recommend rectifying this deficiency in order to continue this programme smoothly.

*In relation to the postgraduate studies the judgment of the team is GOOD.*

#### **4.6. Peer Observations**

The review team is of the view that this aspect of the programme has to be developed for better achievement. A formal mechanism for peer observation needs to be introduced and monitored throughout.

*In relation to peer observations the judgment of the review team is UNSATISFACTORY.*

#### **4.7. Skills Development**

The present curricular structure of the Department of Political Science and Public Policy has been so designed that the students can develop their theoretical, conceptual and critical approaches to this specific field. The reviewers were able to examine the different levels and aspects of the students with a view to enhancing and updating the quality and the capacity of the undergraduate and post - graduate learners. The Department periodically conducts guest programmes, workshops, discussions etc. with the help of expertise from other universities and institutions.

We would suggest that it would be better if the students could be provided with opportunities to engage in practical political activities in diverse ways for them to be in touch with contemporary local and global political processes. It would be desirable if the Department could equip the students with the latent skills such as Information Technology and English. The team of reviewers found, during the discussions, that those who were in the general degree programmes did not have the opportunities to develop their current political knowledge with regard to contemporary political issues. There were not not not sufficient internship programmes to inculcate work culture among the students, nor was there a mechanism to cater to this need.

*In relation to the skills development the judgment of the team is SATISFACTORY.*

#### **4.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling**

At the faculty level as well as the department level the prospectus given to students are included with information about the university, the faculty, the teaching courses, the administrative and academic regulation etc. In addition to that, department is conducting orientation program for freshmen to enable them to understand the degree program, administrative system, examination rules and regulation. Relevant printed documents also have been distributed at this orientation program. The student counseling programme in the department appears to be one of the important aspects to maintain quality of undergraduate education. Though the department has not enough academic counselors, the Faculty has a sufficient number of academic members appointed as Student Counselors and they serve or

served as faculty student counselors. And also the members of the department provide limited, informal and individual counseling during their official consultation period.

Although the counselors have not been trained in a formal way of counseling, the faculty panel of the counselors has been taken a number of measures to overcome problems such as ragging and other constant worry situations. The review team noted that Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim students are living and studying together in harmony at this department. This is extremely praiseworthy and encouraging. Staff discussions with the students in informal way also revealed that the existing counseling service is helpful and the students are satisfied with the existing counseling services. However, there was neither a specific mechanism to carry out counseling services properly nor there was a proof of the performed services.

Staffs are encouraged to help students to get whatever additional support or guidance is required. Faculty Student Counselors are ready to tender or provide support to students, where students need professional guidance on personal problems. Also academic staff encourages them to consult the University's counseling service.

The academic staff members in the department of political science and public policy have volunteered at several occasions not only to provide academic guidance and counselling but also to help the undergraduates in numerous ways.

Many undergraduates in the department are involved in the extracurricular activities and also the department has separate student common room to discuss their own problem is a good practice in administering student affairs in the university system.

The review team learned that the existing academic guidance and counseling system is insufficient to meet the needs of students. Therefore, they recommend allocating enough support to Student Counseling and guidance to the staff to become a professional counselor and to make the service for further recognizable and valuable in future.

***In relation to academic guidance and counseling the judgment of the team is SATISFACTORY.***

Based on the observations made during the visit by the Review Team and as per the facts discussed above the judgments given to those eight aspects under review are as follows:

| <b>Aspect Reviewed</b>   | <b>Judgment Given</b> |
|--|-----------------------|
| 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   | Good                  |
| Peer Observation   | Unsatisfactory        |
| Skills Development   | Satisfactory          |
| Academic Guidance and Counseling                                 | Satisfactory          |

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The strengths/ good practices and weakness identified by the Review Team in each of the eight aspects of evaluation of this review are as below.

### 1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

#### Strengths / Good Practices.

1. The curriculum in the department has been reviewed and updated
2. The department has recognized the need of having a curriculum review on regular basis
3. The both undergraduate and post-graduate courses have strong theoretical and conceptual groundings after the recent review
4. Special attention is given to offer most contemporary knowledge in political science to the undergraduates
5. Special attention is given in the teaching programmes to inculcate civic & democratic values
6. A compendium of undergraduate courses have been prepared
7. The learning objectives and the expected outcomes of each course have been clearly identified in the document
8. The courses have been designed to improve the cognitive abilities such as academic writing, presentation and research skills
9. Lecturers are provided clear guidelines to organize their class room presentations
10. The teaching materials have been prepared for most of the courses
11. The post-graduate programme has been given a new outlook with new courses and work design
12. The department has redesigned the MA & MPhil/PHD programmes
13. The post-graduate programme has been designed to attract the undergraduates to enter life-long education

#### Weaknesses

1. The courses in the department have been planned to cater the needs of students in the special degree programme thus the needs of general degree students were not adequately addressed
2. The teachers are not thoroughly following the course objectives in preparing their day to day lectures (for example they can inform the students about the learning objectives of the lecture topic).
3. In the curriculum design adequate attention were not given to receive student feed backs
4. Not much attention were given to include the practical aspects relating to the courses
5. The students were not given adequate time to learn & review the knowledge they gained through the courses
6. The employability of graduates has not been adequately address in the curriculum review process (for example the courses on public policy, conflict management and development could be used to provide job related practical training to the students)
7. The curriculum is based on the old notion that the liberal arts would prepare the students to adopt into any type of vocation
8. Some courses have repetitive subject contents

## **2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods**

### **Strengths / Good practices**

1. Good practice of moderation and second marking available
2. Attempt to maintain better learning environment
3. Attempt to maintain a departmental library
4. Well qualified and experienced staff available
5. The department photocopying service is available for students
6. All permanent members are give internet and Personal Computers
7. Course objectives, learning outcomes and the detailed syllabi are given
8. Summery for the course contents were given in the department handbook
9. Wide course units are available
10. Balanced assessment methods are in the programme
11. Department conducts a Guest Lecture Programme

### **Weaknesses**

1. No adequate Tamil medium permanent staff
2. Inadequate modern teaching equipments such as multimedia
3. Staff centered teaching is still continuing
4. Lack of self-prepared handouts other than the photo copied materials based on the secondary sources
5. No second examiners from other universities
6. Lack of attention for pre-planned lectures and teaching methods
7. Students with special needs have not been adequately addressed (for example left hand writers do not have chairs with writing pad/Visually handicapped students need special attention)
8. Most of the subjects are based on theory not practical aspects
9. No adequate computer facilities provided for students inside the department

## **3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievement**

### **Strengths / Good Practices**

1. The students have through knowledge on the subjects they have studied (we met students from the year one to four and all type of Post-graduate candidates)
2. The students have shown their keenness to use multimedia for their presentations
3. Many students have the ability to analyze the political events and changes
4. Many students have a very good presentation skills
5. The final year results show very high pass rate (22 out of 30 with second class and first class in 2008)
6. The final year students have shown keen interest to pursue post-graduate studies

## **4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback**

### **Strengths/ Good Practices**

1. Teachers and students meet regularly for their dissertation supervision and mid-Term presentation
2. Informal methods of receiving feed backs such as collecting unanimous notes during the lecture sessions are employed
3. Final year students are given opportunity to interact with the academic staff through field trips and regular meetings

4. The department have organized a mentoring programme under which a teacher has been assigned a group of students for counseling

#### **Weaknesses**

1. No formal method of receiving students feed backs is employed
2. The existing students-teacher relationship has not been used to develop a feed-back system
3. The counseling system is not implemented with a clear focus
4. No attention is given to understand the grievances of general degree students

#### **5. Postgraduate Studies**

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

1. Introduction of new PG programme with new syllabi
2. Among the PHD candidates five being the members of the department
3. PG programme is supplemented the University staff development programme as there are more than eight university academics are in the PHD programme
4. Conducting of PG studies with the collaboration of foreign universities
5. Foreign exposé to the PG students through the tripartite collaboration
6. The undergraduate students also provided some facilities acquired through the funds in the PG programme (e.g. library, Photocopying services)
7. Helped to create research culture in the department
8. Obtaining the services of some PhD candidates to conduct the under-graduate classes by offering teaching assistantships (working as visiting lectures without any financial allocation from the university)
9. The PG programme has its own Coordinator, Computer Assistant and a Librarian thus lessened the burden of the department office staff
10. Promotion of research culture inside the department teaching staff

##### **Weaknesses**

1. PH D candidates are not given clear & strict time frame for the completion of their work
2. Non availability of formal upgrading exercise to upgrade MA students to MPHIL level and MPHIL candidates to PHD level
3. No clear understanding in the university financial administration regarding the pace and the rate of disbursement of funds envisaged by the donors
4. The regulatory environment in the university is not encouraging the programme implementation
5. Long delays in the procurement process

#### **6. Peer Observation**

Department does not have a formal system of peer observation but we have identified some strengths which could be used to develop a formal system of Peer Observation

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

1. Regular departmental meetings are conducted
2. Second marking is available
3. Regular curriculum review exercise has been recognize as a regular event

### **Weaknesses**

1. Last curriculum/subject review has not been used to start a peer observation system
2. The departmental meetings have not been used to offer peer observations
3. Departmental meetings strictly restricted to administrative matters
4. Senior staff do not think that they are obliged to give academic advises to improve the quality of the junior staff
5. Junior staff do not approach the seniors for Peer Observations

## **7. Skills Development**

### **Strengths / Good Practices**

1. Present curricular structure has a focus on developing theoretical and analytical skills
2. The present curricular has some space to bring job related skill development schemes such as Internships
3. The mid-term and dissertation work have been used to improve the writing, presentation and leadership skills
4. The students have opportunities to improve their IT skills and English language knowledge

### **Weaknesses**

1. Inadequacy of computer and multimedia facilities within the department for students
2. Lack of filed based research activities
3. Lack of attention to improve the relevance of the departmental programme by introducing job related skill development
4. Lack of Internships to inculcate work culture among the students
5. Students were not encourage to organize non-subject related activities

## **8. Academic Guidance and Counseling**

### **Strengths / Good Practices**

1. Orientation programme in the faculty & the university for the first year students provides familiar environment in the university
2. Social harmony between students of three media (community)
3. The department has three student counselors (one Senior and three voluntary student Counselors appointed by the Faculty)
4. All information relating to academic support are available in the prospectus
5. Students of the department have common room facility within the building
6. Informal academic guidance available within the department through meeting between the staff and students

### **Weaknesses**

1. No formal training available to the staff for counseling and academic guidance
2. Though there is a arrangements to assign student groups to lectures there is no formal arrangements to continue it during the year
3. Formal mechanism for academic guidance has not been established

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The courses which could accommodate practical work and job oriented training should be redesigned enabling the department to offer Internship training to the students
2. Encourage teachers to identify the learning objective of each lecture topic before the commencement of the lecture
3. Increase the number of courses under public policy and replacing courses which have repetitive subject contents
4. Establish Formal System of Student feedback
5. Introduce strict timeframe for completion of research and submissions of proposals/dissertations by the Post-graduate students
6. Academic staff members must develop a formal Peer Review system within the Department
7. Examine the possibilities of establishing an Internship programme for the students
8. Appoint a Senior Student Counselor for the department
9. Establish academic guidance programme in the department