

# **SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT OF DANCE**



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA**

23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010

**Review Team :**

Prof. Jayasena Kottegoda, University of Visual and Performing Arts

Prof. Udaya Meddegama, University of Peradeniya

Mr. Ariyaratne Kaluarachchi, University of Visual and Performing Arts

Ms. Palika Samanthi, University of Visual and Performing Arts

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## 1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

This subject review is conducted under the guidance of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka for the purpose of quality assurance in the departments of various subjects taught in the universities in Sri Lanka. Achievement and maintenance of excellence and high quality in teaching and research undertaken by the academic staff, the improvement of learning skills of the students, the outcome of teaching and learning, good practices of higher studies at university level etc. are the objectives and areas of observation of the subject review team. Further the Team is expected to observe several other aspects such as the practice of advanced and modern methods of teaching, use of modern technology, facilities available both to the students and staff, the support staff available in the relevant department, infrastructural facilities, qualifications and experience of the academic staff and whether they practice good habits of peer observation, student evaluation, counseling and Career Guidance.

A subject review team normally consists of three experienced professors/ lecturers familiar with the subjects taught in the relevant department. The subject Review Team appointed for the Dept. of Dance at the Jaffna University consisted of Prof. Udaya Meddegama, former Head of the Department of Sinhala/ University of Peradeniya, Professor Jayasena Kottegoda/ Vice Chancellor/ University of Visual and Performing Arts, Prof. Ariyaratne Kaluarachchi, Dean Faculty of Dance and Drama/ University of Visual and Performing Arts and Ms. Palika Samanti/ University of Visual and Performing Arts.

The review team arrived at and visited the University of Jaffna on the morning of 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, 2010. After the initial, formal meetings with the Vice Chancellor and the Head of Department, Prof. Naganathan Gnanakumaran/ Dean Faculty of Arts took the Review Team to the Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts where he introduced the staff of the Dance Department and briefed the Team on the current situation of the department. Then the Team discussed the Agenda prepared by the Dept. and made minor alterations in consultation with the HOD, Ms. S. Piraphaharan. The Team was then led to the auditorium where they were received in the traditional Hindu way followed by a welcome with a dance by the students of the department. Then the Team conducted the subject review with the full corporation of the academic staff, non-academic staff and students taking the two subjects i.e. Dance and Art and Design.

In the process of subject review, eight aspects namely, Curriculum Design, Content and Review, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods, Quality of students, Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Postgraduate Studies, Peer Observation, Skills Development and Academic Guidance and Counseling were reviewed following guidelines provided by the QAA Council. The Review Team, while observing the activities, resources and facilities of the department related to the afore-mentioned eight aspects, carried out the process according to the agenda provided by the Department.

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

The University of Jaffna was first established in 1974, as Jaffna Campus of the then University of Sri Lanka, offering courses in science and humanities. The first batch of 104 students was admitted in October 1974. In 1978, with the implementation of the universities Act No. 16 of 1978, it became an independent and autonomous university as the University of Jaffna. Faculty of Medicine was established at Kaithady in October of 1978, and 70 students were admitted to it at the beginning. The Medical Faculty was subsequently moved to join the other faculties on the Thirunelvely site. The Agriculture Faculty was established in Kilinochchi in 1990 and foundation for the Engineering faculty was laid in 1995.

The main campus of the University is located in Thirunelvely in Jaffna (pop .1100 000) on a 43 acre campus.

### *The Faculty of Arts and the Ramanathan Academy of fine Arts*

The Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts was first affiliated to the Institute of Fine Arts, which was later affiliated to the Jaffna Campus in 1975. The objectives were to systematize aesthetic education with a view to meet cultural demands. This has contributed, according to the SER, to improve quality and quantity of the aptitude of the student population. Subsequently the RAFA was bifurcated in 1995 into two new departments, namely Department of Dance and Department of Music in the Faculty of Arts. Dr. S. Jeyarajah was appointed the Head of Department. The subject of Art and Design was introduced as a discipline in 1999 at RAFA, it was placed under the Head, Department of Dance. At present this course functions under a Coordinator.

## 3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Aims and Learning Outcomes: With regard to this aspect, the Review team wishes to quote the relevant section in the SER.

### Objectives, learning outcomes, and details of programmes

**Our Art & Design course aims to:** - 1.1.1. Provide theoretical and practical knowledge and training in Dance and Art & Design, following a series of theory courses and practical courses based on a standard university Dance and Art & Design curriculum. 1.1.2. Promote knowledge and understanding to students as graduates in order to obtain a social status in Dance as a performing Art. 1.1.3. Promote skills on understanding Dance and Art. Further the present training is given in order to serve the community to meet the demands of regional, national and global needs. **2 Programmes and objectives related to learning outcomes. 1.2.1.** At the inception the Department of Dance provided four year course in Diploma in Dance. Since 1992, the Department provides courses namely

1. Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)
2. Dance as a subject for the General Arts Degree, for the students of Arts Faculty who offer this.

The Faculty of Arts offers a B.F.A (*Bharathanatiyam*) and BFA (*Art & Design*) degree Programmes with duration of four years on the terminal system at the first out set and later based on a semester course unit system from 1999/2000. Since 2003/2004 onwards academic course is

provided under credit valued semester system. The Department of Dance offers course units in compliance with the policies adopted by the Faculty. Reform in the curriculum (based on the semester system) was first introduced in year 2001. Further modifications were adopted in January, 2005 following the U.G.C. Policy of G.P.A (Grade Point Average) system, which introduce "modularized credit based" system instead of "course unit" system. Both curricula adopt a credit system where an inclusion of 120 credits for a special degree program is demanded. A course unit is defined as approximately 45 hours where 30 hours allocation made for lectures and 15 hours allocation for contacts (including tutorial assignments, tests). Practical work includes 90 hours. Students should obtain knowledge and understanding on the following areas by successful completion of the degree programme (Following courses brief the course units offered in the Department of Dance; curriculum 2001 do not contain core and elective course units, all units are considered optional; curriculum 2005 contain fixed core and elective course units where the BFA degree students are compelled to follow all core courses and selected electives. [SER pp.1-3]

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

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

###### **Strengths and Good Practices:**

“ The curriculum is designed to provide thorough understanding of basic concepts in Dance and Art and Design in order to prepare [students] to meet the current needs in this field and apply the knowledge and talent accordingly in the present globalization” [SER p.06]

The curriculum of the Dept. has been designed with a vision of achieving this goal. Further the curriculum of Dance, which emphasizes the importance of practice, gives sufficient time and place to both theoretical and practical aspects. The curriculum for Art and Design too envisages attaining high standards in the discipline.

Curriculum Design and Review in general, is a satisfactory aspect especially because the Dept. has shown interest in reviewing the curriculum from time to time. Most of the important subjects and areas in the field of Bharatanatyam are covered by the syllabus. [See SER Appendix for the lists of course units with titles] The Dept. of Dance offers 46 course units including the final year dissertation in the four years and the Art and Design too offers a similar number of course units.

Art and Design covers all the important aspects in the subject. Curriculum has been designed to give equal weight to theory and practice.

Major review of the curriculum has been undertaken in 2006, but necessary improvements and adjustments continue to up to date.

###### **Weaknesses:**

In the Curriculum for dance the content of some of the course units do not seem to be sufficiently comprehensive to be taught in a semester. For example, *Alarippu* is only one area in Bharata Natyam and therefore it cannot be given the place of a full course unit in the curriculum.

The Art and Design course functioning jointly with Dance is not a healthy practice. These two subjects should be bifurcated and developed into two independent departments.

Neither in Dance nor in Art and Design detailed syllabi with references or suggested readings were available.

**Suggestions:**

Each course unit should be provided with detailed syllabus clearly outlined with contents, learning outcomes, expectations, requirements and reading lists.

Courses in Dance as well as Art and Design should target a wider and competitive job market. Students' attitude towards job prospects must be more positive and changed to aspire for more challenging jobs other than teaching.

The Team proposes a course for costume design and making for dancers.

Other courses, the Team wishes to recommend are Teaching Methods and Educational Psychology.

***Level of Judgment: SATISFACTORY***

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

**Strengths/Good Practices:**

This is another satisfactory aspect in the department of Dance. Teaching in general is through conventional lectures on theory and practical training. Some teachers use multimedia and demonstrations using slides. Assignments, tutorials etc. are used to assess the outcomes of learning of subjects.

As the SER states assessment is out of 100 marks, and 75% is allocated to theory paper and 25 for assignments, practical classes etc. This needs to be revised to conform to the standard practice of awarding 60 marks to written exams and the remaining 40 to assignments and other in-course tests.

**Weaknesses:**

In teaching, the lecturers could be a bit more lively and interactive with students. The lecturers could adjust themselves to target university standards rather than following conventional teaching styles of school teachers.

Suggestions:

- Teaching could be improved by using modern methods and technology and providing students with handouts and lesson material.
- More new courses should be introduced or the existing courses re-designed so that students will be given opportunity to engage in field work and extracurricular activities.
- Folk dance groups and artists should be invited to perform at the institute and students must be taken out to see and participate in such activities.
- To compensate for the inadequate number of senior lecturers and professors, link or exchange programs could be established with other universities where similar courses are taught with more facilities and experienced professors.

***Level of Judgment: SATISFACTORY***

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

#### Strengths/ Good Practices:

Students who enroll in the Department of dance are those who have been selected by the UGC on merit of Advanced level results and the Z score. Such students will have to take a practical test conducted by the Dept. Only those who pass the practical test will be referred to the UGC for final approval and registration. This procedure assures the admission of quality students who possess the knowledge as well as aptitude to study Dance and Art and Design at university level, and later to take up postgraduate studies.

From the student's presentation and performances the Review Team were convinced of the high standards of the students. Further the Team by perusing the mark sheets and results of the final examinations noted that students of this department gain good results. Most of the students obtain Second Class Upper and Lower Division passes. The First Classes are limited to one or two per year. The Team finds this as a healthy sign of maintaining quality as First classes have become a menace in some other universities under the course unit system. Only 1% of the students have secured First class passes during the past several years. [See, SER pp.10-11] Students go through rigorous training in practice sessions. From the Welcome Dance and another dance performances held as demonstration the students exhibited their talents as well as commitment for thorough understanding of the subjects. In their discussions with the Review Team, students expressed honest views and feelings about the subjects they learn as well as about the Academy and the problems and difficulties they face. However, the students seem to be enjoying the courses and they appreciate the standard and corporation of their teachers.

**Students in the Art and Design** unit seem to be having more problems than the Dance students. The lecturer in charge of the Art and Design course seemed to be highly motivated and dedicated to his work. The lecturer is carrying out his duty with a positive and innovative attitude. Art and Design students are confident about their job prospects. They know that in their field there are job opportunities and openings for the creative, talented artists and designers. In the modern society that is developing fast, there exists an ever growing demand for artists and designers.

#### Weaknesses:

No obvious, noteworthy weakness was observed in 4.3. There are, nevertheless some drawbacks and shortcomings that may hinder achievements and progress of students:

- i. RAFA is located six kilometers away from the main campus. This is a problem for the students as the students cannot use the main library and the IT centre after the lectures in the afternoon, or during intervals between lectures.
- ii. As a result of difficulties in transport, students find it difficult to meet the authorities at the main campus to consult them on personal or common student problems.
- iii. Toilet facilities are not sufficient at the RAFA. There is only one canteen for all the students and as the toilets are located inside the canteen building the female students find it embarrassing to use the facility when the canteen is full of customers.
- iv. Students as well as the staff need more computer facilities with internet connection.
- v. There is no health centre at the RAFA. It is not easy to go to the health centre on the main campus for urgent medical attention.
- vi. Students cannot easily find most of the books they need for reference in the library.

- vii. Dance students do not have suitable, spacious changing rooms.
- viii. There are no common rooms for the students at the RAFA.

***Level of Judgment: GOOD***

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

**Strengths:**

This aspect is strong in the Department of Dance. The Dept. has been monitoring student feedback regularly. Forms used for the purpose were available for inspection. The staff has taken the trouble to analyze the data obtained for the use of staff for qualitative and quantitative improvement of teaching. The students too, in meetings with the Review Team, expressed satisfaction with the practice of student feedback. Student Feedback is obtained at the end of semester as well as end of the academic year. Findings of the evaluation are discussed at the staff meetings and made available after analysis, to individual lecturers for necessary action.

Weaknesses:

No significant weakness was observed in [4.4] Extent and use of Student Feedback.

***Level of Judgment: GOOD***

#### **4.5 Postgraduate Studies**

**Strengths:**

The department of Dance and Art and Design does not offer postgraduate programs. At present, there are only two Senior lecturers with postgraduate qualifications and one lecturer is on study leave. There have been a few students who have completed Master's Degree externally.

**Weaknesses:**

The Review Team could not observe any ongoing postgraduate work related to this department. Probationary and Temporary lecturers are keen in pursuing postgraduate studies but they are disappointed due to lack of facilities locally or due to difficulties in going to India for the purpose.

***Level of Judgment: UNSATISFACTORY***

#### **4.6 Peer Observation**

**Strengths:**

In this department, there are no professors or a sufficient number of Senior Lecturers to implement Peer Observation and guide the lecturers. However, Peer observation takes place informally as the lecturers are in close contact with each other and the progress and problems related to teaching can be discussed among themselves or with the HOD. Due to the nature of the subjects taught in the department of Dance and Art and Design, when one lecturer is taking a class, especially practical classes, others can observe and assist.

**Weaknesses:**

No documentary evidence, except for one report by the Dean of the Faculty, was available on this aspect. The Dept. can invite senior lecturers or professors from other disciplines to observe lectures and practical sessions and obtain feedback from them.

***Level of Judgment: SATISFACTORY***

#### **4.7 Skills Development**

**Strengths:**

With regard to the Skills development, the SER states: “Students’ skills development is embedded in our curriculum design and the learning.”[SER p.19] Further the students are encouraged to exhibit their talents and skills in performances under supervision of lecturers. Students in Art and Design, by the nature of the subjects they learn can develop skills in a number of useful skills such as photography, drawing, design, painting, sculpturing etc. These skills will help them greatly after graduation to find employment. Dance students need to develop skills in additional subjects such as English and IT for competing successfully in the job market as well as to compete for scholarships to go abroad for postgraduate studies. Presentation skills of the students are at an impressive level.

**Weaknesses:**

The Review Team did not see any evidence of attempts by the department for skills development of the students. The best students in the department, following graduation with First class honors are generally recruited to the Temporary staff. If such students without the additional skills above mentioned, join the academic staff, they will face difficulties in carrying out their duties as well as taking up postgraduate studies.

***Level of Judgment: SATISFACTORY***

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

**Strengths:**

During the orientation program in the First Year, the students are given adequate guidance related to academic matters. Throughout the year, counseling services are available. Each year, one of the lecturers in the department is appointed as student counselor. The general counseling service of the university that caters for the RAFA also, is under the Director of Student Welfare. He is assisted by 15 lecturers as assistant counselors. They hold monthly meetings with the Vice Chancellor to discuss welfare matters and problems in the hostels. According to the Student Welfare Director, both staff and students faced serious problems and difficulties during the war period. So the Student counselors of the Jaffna University had to deal with specific problems of students that are not found in other universities. Especially the students who were released recently from the Wannai area need special attention and support with regard to food and financial aid. The welfare service of the university, with the help of some organizations, has been providing free food to such students for some time. However, providing of breakfast has now been stopped due to practical reasons. Thus the Academic guidance and counseling have to be taken together due to specific circumstances in Jaffna University.

**Weaknesses:**

The staff of the Dance and Art and Design to take more active involvement in Academic guidance and counseling. Staff has not been given any training in guidance or counseling. In discussions with the staff and students this subject did not emerge. However, the students expressed their grievances some of which could be addressed by the staff through amicable and constructive guidance and counseling.

***Level of Judgment: SATISFACTORY***

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

<b>Aspect Reviewed</b>	<b>Judgment</b>
Curriculum Design, Content and Review	Satisfactory
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	Satisfactory
Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	Good
Extent and Use of Student Feedback	Good
Postgraduate Studies	Unsatisfactory
Peer Observation	Satisfactory
Skills Development	Satisfactory
Academic Guidance and Counseling	Satisfactory

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

### **1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review:**

**Strengths/ good Practices:**

Curriculum is comprehensive; it covers a large area of the subject. Curriculum has been reviewed a few times.

**Weaknesses:**

Curriculum has not been fully reviewed taking into consideration the needs of the time and society. The subject of some course units are not wide enough for a full course of study running for one semester.

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

**Strengths/Good Practices:**

Teaching is mainly through conventional methods and practices. Some teachers use modern methods and technology. Assessment is based on theory and practice. Close contact of teachers with students in most of the classes and practical sessions may be mentioned as a good practice.

**Weaknesses:**

Students do not have facilities to use the main library and IT centre and the surroundings at the RAFA is also not conducive for teaching and Learning. In lectures on theory, the teachers may apply modern methods of teaching.

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

**Strengths/ Good Practices:**

Students are Advanced level qualified who have offered Drama and Theatre, Music etc. at school. They are tested at the university also on their knowledge and aptitude before admitting. The undergraduates demonstrate high quality. Their performing and presentation skills are of a commendable standard. Intention of sending students on field trips and for performances outside the university is also a good practice.

**Weaknesses:**

No particular weakness in this area was observed except for the difficulties students are facing as a result of distance from the main campus and lack of some infrastructural facilities.

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

**Strengths and Good practices:**

Student Feedback is obtained and documentary evidence is available at the department. Questionnaires are given in classes at the end of each semester. Students can express their views on the teaching and other academic matters by personal meetings as well as through representatives at the Faculty Board.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**5. Postgraduate Studies**

**Strengths/Good Practices:**

This is a weak aspect in the department of Dance and Art and Design. No regular postgraduate courses or records of research scholars attached to the Department were noted.

**Weaknesses:**

No plans for development of a postgraduate program or unit. Junior members of staff should take up postgraduate studies making best use of available resources. There seems to be no interest at Faculty level to find solutions to the problems facing the probationary lecturers in this department as regards their postgraduate studies.

## **6. Peer Observation**

### **Strengths/ Good practices:**

This was found to be another weak aspect in the department. The SER states “the Head and the senior academics observe the performance of the junior academics in teaching...” [p.19]. There is a report by the Dean of the Faculty on observation of Teaching in the department in which some instructive comments have been made.

### **Weaknesses:**

More reliable action should be taken to improve a viable system of Peer Observation.

## **7. Skills Development**

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

The subjects taught in the department are helpful in skills development. Presentation skills of the students are of good quality. There is awareness of developing other useful skills such as language and IT among the members of the staff.

### **Weaknesses:**

Apart from the interest in producing graduates of sound subject knowledge, no other projects or special plans for skills development are implemented.

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

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

The General Counseling system in the university covers this department as well. Student Counselors and Director of Student welfare extend their service to the RAFA. One member of the Dance Dept. serves as a student counselor. Members of the Department are accessible to students for consultation and guidance.

### **Weaknesses:**

SER [p.20] does not refer to any activity or direct approach to Academic Guidance and Counseling. The Review Team did not see any positive steps taken by the department to improve this aspect.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Curriculum should be regularly reviewed and updated introducing new courses.
2. Assessment methods need revision to conform to the standard assessment systems practiced under the course unit/ continuous assessment methods in the national universities
3. Course units with insufficient content should be improved or incorporated with other, similar courses.
4. Department must consider starting a postgraduate program
5. Members of the staff, both senior and junior should undertake research with a view of publishing
6. Teaching, especially theory, should be modernized
7. Promote the RAFA to the status of a Faculty and rename it 'Faculty of Fine Arts.'
8. Bifurcate Dance and Art and Design into two independent departments.
9. Teach students the difference between class room teaching and making a presentation
10. Detailed syllabi should be drafted with the credit value, course content, requirements, expected outcomes and references or suggested readings.
11. Two new courses i.e. Educational Psychology and Teaching Methodology for final year students may be introduced as optional courses.
12. Infrastructural facilities such as washrooms and changing rooms must be provided to the students
13. Senior and Junior Common Rooms must be provided
14. The Departmental Library should be modernized and stocked with more reading material and audio visual facilities
15. The difficulties facing the junior lecturers in pursuing postgraduate studies or finding supervisors locally need to be addressed immediately.

## 7. ANNEXURES

### Annex 2: AGENDA OF THE REVIEW VISIT

#### **First Day – (23/03/2010 Tuesday)**

08.30 – 09.00	Private meeting of Reviewer’s Panel with QAA Council Representatives
09.00 – 09.30	Discuss the Agenda for the Visit.
09.30 - 10.00	Meeting with Vice Chancellor, Dean/Arts, Chairman Internal QA Unit. (Working with Tea)
10.00 – 10.20	Reaching RAFA.
10.20 – 10.30	Welcome Dance.
10.30 – 11.30	Introduction - presentation about the Department.
11.30 – 12.00	Discussion.
12.00 – 13.30	Lunch Break
13.30 – 14.00	Observing files & documents.
14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with Department academic Staff. (working with tea)
15.00 – 16.00	Observing Departmental facilities.

#### **Second Day - (24/03/2010 Wednesday)**

08.30 – 09.00	Observing Library & Computer Centre at main premises.
09.00 – 09.30	Observing Lectures – ADAC 11013 (Practical)
09.30 – 10.00	Observing Lectures – ADNC 41013 (Practical)
10.00 – 10.30	Observing Lectures – ADNC 31033 (Demonstration)(working with tea)
10.30 – 11.00	Observing Student presentation. (Theory)
11.00 – 11.30	Observing Student Demonstration. (Practical)
11.30 -- 12.15	Meeting with students. (Dance & Art & Design)
12.15 – 13.30	Lunch.
13.30 – 14.00	Meeting with non academic Staff.
14.00 – 14.30	Academic guidance & Counseling.
14.30 -- 15.00	Tea Break
15.00 – 15.30	Meeting with Passed out Graduates.
15.30 – 16.30	Brief meeting of Reviewers.

#### **Third Day – (25/03/2010 Thursday)**

08.30 – 09.30	Staff and students performance.
09.30 – 10.30	Observing the Students output of Art & Design and other facilities. (working with tea)
10.30 – 11.00	Discussion with Staff members – Dance & Art & Design.
10.30 – 11.30	Final meeting with Head and Staff.
11.30 – 12.30	Meeting with Head & Staff for reporting writing.
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch.