

# **SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
PALI AND BUDDHIST STUDIES**



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA**

22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> April 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 Pāli and Buddhist Studies (DPBS), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (H&SS), University of Ruhuna (UR) submitted a self evaluation report (SER) consisting of twelve sections, namely: Introduction; Aims, learning outcomes and programme details; Students, staff and facilities; Curriculum design, content and review; Teaching, learning and assessment methods; Quality of students including student progress and achievements; The extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative; Postgraduate studies; Peer observation; Skills development; Academic guidance and counseling; and Conclusive points to be highlighted. The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims and learning outcomes given in the (SER).

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. The 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 DPBS from 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2009. The agenda of the three day visit is attached (see annex 1).

The evaluation of eight aspects was based on:

Meetings held with the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of Department, academic staff, non-academic staff, student counselors of the Department, undergraduates representing special degree programmes, some postgraduate students and supportive staff in the Department;

Observations of university Library, physical facilities of the DPBS including Class rooms, Lecturers' rooms, Departmental library, etc.; and Observation of teaching and students' presentations; and 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.

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

The University of Ruhuna was established by a Special Presidential Decree on 1st September 1978, as Ruhuna University College, fulfilling a long cherished desire of the people of Southern Sri Lanka. Initially it constituted with four faculties, namely, Agriculture, Arts, Medicine and Science.

The Faculties of Agriculture and Science were located in the premises of Technical College at Meddawatte, Matara, whereas the Faculty of Arts was located in the premises of Teachers' Training College at Eliyakanda, Matara. These three faculties were initially affiliated to Universities of Peradeniya, Kelaniya and Colombo respectively. The Faculty of Medicine was affiliated to the University of Colombo and the first batch of students who enrolled for the M.B.B.S. Degree were sent to the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. This affiliation was continued until the Ruhuna University College was upgraded to a fully-fledged University on 1st February 1984. A Faculty of Engineering was established in Hapugala (Galle) in 1999. The most recent additions to the list of faculties in the University of Ruhuna are Faculty of Management & Finance and the Faculty of Fisheries & Marine Sciences & Technology which were set up in 2003 and 2005, respectively. Thus the University presently comprises seven faculties.

Faculties of Science, 'Management & Finance', 'Fisheries & Marine Sciences & Technology' and 'Humanities & Social Sciences' are located in the main campus premises at Wellamadama (Matara) and Faculties of Agriculture and Medicine are located in Kamburupitiya (Matara) and Karapitiya (Galle), respectively. The central administration unit of the University is also located at the University Complex, which is situated in a scenic site at Wellamadama with an extent of about 72 acres. It is bordered by the sea and paddy fields and is in close proximity to Dondra, the Southern tip of Sri Lanka.

The University offers basic degree programmes in their respective disciplines. Depending on the facilities available, MA, MBA, MSc, MPhil, and PhD degrees are offered by the respective faculties. In addition Diploma and Certificate Courses are offered in various disciplines.

A total of 272 students were enrolled for the bachelors' degree programmes during the first Academic Year (1978/79) and at the commencement of the 2006/07 Academic Year it has increased to 6752 for all faculties.

As outlined in the University Corporate Plan (2002-2006) the Vision, Mission, and Goals of the university are as follows:

**Vision:** “.....vision is to be an outstanding internationally respected academic centre of excellence which proudly affirms its Sri Lankan identity and which is committed to rigorous scholarship, academic freedom, sound moral values and social responsibility”.

**Mission:** “In pursuit of its vision the University of Ruhuna will strive to produce outstanding internationally accredited graduates who are innovative, analytical, articulate, balanced and adaptable, with life-long of learning, and to strive through quality teaching, research and community service, to contribute to the advancement of scholarship and the enrichment of the educational, cultural, economic, and natural environments of the society we serve”.

The intended objectives in order to achieve the university’s mission are:

To create a student-centered teaching and learning environment that will encourage students to reach their full potential, and that will produce graduates of distinction, committed to lifelong learning, integrity and professionalism, capable of being responsive leaders and communicators in their fields;

To conduct original scholarship and basic and applied research, and produce creative works of international excellence for its quality and impact on both academic and user communities;  
To promote and enhance partnerships with the community and respond to the cultural, economic, social and technological needs of the country and particularly of the Southern Region;

To create an environment in which staff and students can achieve their full potential; and  
To be fully accountable for the effective management of public and private resources bestowed upon the institution.

### **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences was founded with the establishment of the Ruhuna University Collage affiliated to the University of Colombo. On obtaining the fully-fledged university status, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences started operating as an independent body. Now it is a well-established faculty offering Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees in a wide spectrum of disciplines of diverse character. In addition, under the aegis of the faculty, BBA and BCom Degrees were offered until the Department of Business Administration was elevated to a faculty in 2003.

The faculty has instituted a computer centre to enhance the students’ skills in information and communication technology as focused on the potential needs of the job market. Moreover, it has planned two special programmes to advance the Information Technology and English Language Proficiency of the undergraduates under the IRQUE (Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education) project funded by the World Bank. A Cultural Centre has been established to carry on all types of cultural activities. The Centre for Modern Languages is to make sure that the students have opportunities to improve their language abilities well beyond their mother tongue.

### **Vision**

“The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to be a center of academic and scientific excellence nationally and internationally.”

**Mission is**

- To develop honest, adaptable and productive citizens;
- To articulate and promote interaction with society at large, with the view to contributing towards the development of the nation; and
- To institute mechanisms for partnership programmes developed with the aim of improving resources

The H&SS is the largest faculty of the university having approximately an undergraduate student body of 3000 and an annual intake of over 500 students every year. The faculty offers over 400 course modules in 12 diversified disciplines per annum through the six departments operating under its aegis.

The H&SS is composed of six departments as follows:

- Department of Economics
- Department of History
- Department of Geography
- Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies**
- Department of Sinhala
- Department of Sociology

The students are also assisted in their studies and extracurricular activities by the following units:

- English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU)
- Computer Centre
- Resource Centre for Modern Languages
- Cultural Centre
- Centre for Conflict Studies
- Course Unit Coordinating Office

**Department of Pāli and Buddhist Studies (DPBS)**

The subjects Pāli and Buddhist Studies were introduced under the Department of Sinhala with effect from 15. 02. 1988 for General Degree course. On 11<sup>th</sup> March 1992, the DPBS was established as an independent Department and Special Degree courses were introduced, in Pali and Buddhist Studies. Consequently, the practice of sending students to other universities was terminated. Heads from the beginning of the DPBS were Dr. A.J. Ruhunuhewa, Founder Head (1992-1996), Prof. Midigama Sorata (1996-1998; 2001-2007), Prof. Medagama Nandawamsa(1998-2001) and Dr. Wilegoda Ariyadeva (2007-2008).

**Vision** of the Department is,

- To develop DPBS as a centre of excellence in Buddhist Studies and Pāli and to provide required Buddhist theoretical and practical knowledge of intellectual and spiritual development.

**Mission** of the Department is,

- To achieve this goal making efforts to produce excellent scholars would be the unique mission concerning the development in achieving knowledge of Pāli language and to preserve ancient Buddhist cultural heritage as well as the modern comparative religious and philosophical studies.

In order to fulfill that mission, the DPBS always try to pursue excellence in teaching and research to the benefit of their students, academics and wider society. Unfortunately the DPBS is established in a small space acquired from the ELTU building and has not enough physical facilities to provide more conducive environment for teaching and learning. Conference Room facility is not available to conduct monthly staff meetings, seminars, group discussions, workshops, seminars and guest lectures. The academic staff shares 8 small single rooms and 6 computers without networked that limits their real capacity of teaching and research. The Departmental Library provides some resources to the staff to carry out their research.

The academic staff of the department comprises of 11 permanent Lecturers including three professors and 5 senior lecturers and 3 lecturers. In addition there are 2 lecturers on contract, 2 temporary assistant Lecturers and two temporary tutors. The department has 3 non academic staff members whom are contributing well for the smooth functioning of the department.

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

#### **3.1. Aims**

1. Dissemination and sharing the knowledge of Pāli Language, Buddhist Philosophy and Buddhist Culture locally and internationally.
2. To provide study programmes in Pāli Language, Literature and other Indo-Aryan Languages, i.e. Sanskrit.
3. Making aware of the importance of personality development and spiritual understanding through Buddhist Philosophy.
4. Study of Buddhist cultural and historical background, philosophy and well known Academic and Research Centre of East-West, in the past and present.
5. Improving research skills in reading and understanding relevant courses.
6. Guiding the students to conduct researches and field works on Buddhist sites with cultural and Buddhist artistic value, particularly in the Ruhuna Province, and in Sri Lanka in general.
8. To facilitate course studies and research background for foreign scholars, offering Courses pertaining to Pāli, Buddhist Philosophy and Buddhist Culture.
9. Introducing new causes targeting other Departments and Faculties
10. Introducing Departmental and Institutional fund generating programmes encouraging local and foreign students.
11. To educate degree holders targeting both schools and higher educational Institution.

#### **3.2. Learning Outcomes**

##### **a) Student Centered**

- a) To get a sufficient practical knowledge, in basic degree level, regarding data collection, research methodology, pedagogy and evaluation.
- b) Developing skills to assimilate subject related experience to the professional and social life.
- c) Developing the practical skills to resolve individual and social conflicts as well as stress management

**b) Other Outcomes**

- a) Satisfaction regarding the administration, study programmes, examinations, researches and evaluation among the DPBS Staff.
- b) Outcome of well qualified scholars for any academic staff in the relevant field.
- c) Outcome of experiences and vision in administration, programming and resource management among the staff, academic and non-academic.
- d) Extending and make aware of the above experiences to the Course Unit Office and the Faculty Board.

**Programme Details**

At the undergraduate level, the department provides courses leading to Bachelor of Arts general and special degrees in Pāli, Buddhist Philosophy and Buddhist Culture. The students who seek to specialize are selected on the basis of their performance at the 1000 level course unit examinations at the end of the first year.

**Present Student Population of Undergraduate Programmes  
- Academic Year- 2007/2008**

**G : General Degree****S : Special Degree**

| Subject             | 1 <sup>st</sup> Year | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year |           | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year |           | 4 <sup>th</sup> Year |           | Total      |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|------------|
|                     |                      | G                    | S         | G                    | S         | G                    | S         |            |
| Pāli                | 40                   | 02                   | 01        | 12                   | 02        | --                   | 02        | 59         |
| Buddhist Philosophy | 41                   | 04                   | 00        | 17                   | 03        | --                   | 04        | 69         |
| Buddhist Culture    | 76                   | 03                   | 02        | 32                   | 08        | --                   | 03        | 124        |
| Total               | <b>157</b>           | <b>09</b>            | <b>03</b> | <b>61</b>            | <b>13</b> | --                   | <b>09</b> | <b>252</b> |

The registration in DPBS courses by the students of other Departments (Ex: Economics, Geography, History & Archeology, Sinhala, Sociology, and particularly the Faculty of Management & Finance) convince the academic level and the sufficient breath and depth of DPBS programmes offered.

Apart from the undergraduate courses, following Post Graduate Courses are also offered by The DPBS.

| Subject                    | Degree Programme | Duration (Years) |         |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------|
|                            |                  | Minimum          | Maximum |
| <b>Pāli</b>                | M. A.            | 02               | 05      |
|                            | M. Phil.         | 02               | 05      |
|                            | PhD              | 03               | 05      |
| <b>Buddhist Philosophy</b> | M. A.            | 02               | 05      |
|                            | M. Phil.         | 02               | 05      |
|                            | PhD              | 03               | 05      |
| <b>Buddhist Culture</b>    | M. A.            | 02               | 05      |
|                            | M. Phil.         | 02               | 05      |
|                            | PhD              | 03               | 05      |

#### 4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

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

BA General and Special degree courses converted to the faculty's semester system with course units based on course credits in 2002. Under the two semesters (15 weeks each) DPBS offers 8 course units per each subject (total  $3 \times 8 = 24$ ) for the general degree students during year I, year II and year III. Students take another two units provided by other departments and they help them to have a multidisciplinary learning environment.

BA Special degree students of the DPBS follow twenty four compulsory course units during all three levels (year II, III and IV). Total credits to be completed for special degree programme are 132. Out of 132, 78 credits (26 course units) can be collected from the DPBS which accounted for 68% of the total credits. Other special feature is that students from other departments are allowed to follow some of the courses offered by the DPBS. The flexibility in student choice is sufficiently proved by ongoing interdisciplinary subject related themes suggested by DPBS. This is a good practice that the DPBS contributes to broaden the horizon of knowledge of students and improve on the multidisciplinary nature and interdepartmental harmony of the faculty.

After the introduction of Semester system in 2001, a new curriculum was designed according to the semester based credit system. After that the curriculum of the DPBS was reviewed from time to time in order to upgrade the content of the programmes. According to the information given by the Head of DPBS the latest major syllabus revision took place in 2009 and submitted to the Faculty Board for approval. Thus the DPBS has followed the good practice that upgrading their syllabuses rather regularly. Syllabus revision workshops were conducted at the departmental level with the help of outside syllabus revision experts. However, the Faculty level or University level syllabus revision committee is not available to review the proposal.

The review team observed that all the teachers are required to prepare a course outline with list of references before commencement of teaching. This is called C1 form. Review team

had the opportunity to examine them. All the members are with the impression that the C1 forms of most of the courses are up to date.

The review team is of the opinion that the content of the courses offered are adequately covered for the requirements of a degree programme of this nature. However, some important courses such as Meditation Theory and Practices, Oriental Languages, etc are not adequately covered by the syllabus. Computer based course units are not included in the degree programme.

Based on curricular and content of courses we are of the opinion that aims and learning outcomes are met satisfactorily. In general, the review of the course contents of the course modules offered for the special and general degrees are appropriate for the respective programmes.

However, meaningful measures have not been taken to improve the standards of English so that the students do not develop their capabilities in making use of the reading materials available in English.

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

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

##### **Teaching and Learning**

The DPBS is guided by the Faculty teaching, learning and assessment strategy based on semester system. While every student is given a student handbook by the faculty when they enroll in the first year programme, the Head of DPBS gives necessary instructions for special degree students regarding the courses, facilities and necessary guidelines. At the beginning of every semester students, academic staff and non-academic staff are instructed regarding the process of teaching learning and assessments.

Majority of courses are conducted by several staff members in order to utilize the expertise of all staff for the benefit of students. Extra attention is provided as and when necessary for students by temporary staff members under the guidance of the course unit coordinator.

The department uses a common format for the C1 form which is given to students at the first day of each course unit. The C1 form provides every detail about the specific course unit such as date, time, place and person conducting the lecture, the title of each lecture, date of assignments and a reading list, students are able to plan their learning schedules at the beginning of each semester.

The department is currently practicing a *student centered* teaching learning method as well as a *teacher centered* method. While traditional classroom teaching is practiced in the DPBS interactive teaching methods are now becoming popular. The course units are taught through a combination of lectures, Tutorial Sessions, Field Visits, Practicing Meditation, Subject related other activities such as exhibitions, organizing Guest Lectures and Work Shops. Library Visits, Handouts, Visiting Lecturers, Overhead Projectors, Multimedia Projectors, Internet and Other References, Student projects, final year dissertation and presentations are also adopted to encourage student-centered learning environment. Though a dissertation is

directly providing the research base for special degree students Course unit on Research Methods is not in the syllabus which is a weakness.

The DPBS is not so strong with many teaching learning facilities; however the DPBS manages to use modern teaching learning methods such as multimedia, OHP, whiteboard and handouts with the help of the other departments. The review team observed that the facilities are being used by the majority teachers. Handouts and reading materials are provided at the beginning or at the end of the session.

Before the beginning of the course, some lecturers accompany with students to observe the library to enhance their awareness on the effective use of library reference sources.

Very recently the DPBS is able to allocate personal computers to some lecturers enhancing their capabilities of teaching and research. However computers are not networked so that usage of internet facilities cannot be used for teaching-learning activities. Therefore an initiative should be taken to develop internet facility in the department. Availability of computers for students' use is also inadequate.

Non academic staff members are also happy with the prevailing environment in the department and support the academic administration of the department. The team is pleased with the friendly teaching and learning environment maintained in classrooms subject to lack of space. The review team observed that the students are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Both academic and non-academic staff displayed a high level of commitment.

### **Assessment Methods**

The DPBS's assessment procedure is based on the faculty's examination regulations under the semester system. In general, the evaluation consists of two parts, viz., (i) in- course assessments and (ii) semester-end examinations. Two in-course assignments are given within one semester and students are offered 20% marks for them while 80% marks are allocated for the end-semester examination.

At the end of the semester, the grade points will be averaged to calculate the 'Grade Point Average' (GPA). The GPA will also be calculated at the end of the academic program to evaluate the overall performance of a student. The level of performance (First, Second class or ordinary pass) will be decided on the basis of the overall GPA. The DPBS uses a variety of different assessment methods as the in-course assessments such as assignments, Class Tests, Student Presentations, Discussions and Report Writing. From this type of assessments both knowledge and skills can be evaluated simultaneously.

While the semester-end examination is conducted by the faculty, setting up and moderation of all the question papers and assessment of them are being done by the academic staff of DPBS. A system for the assessment of semester end examination is being handled within the Department and semester-end Examination papers of the special degree students are reviewed by both internal and external examiners. However preparation of a marking scheme is not in practice. The final year dissertations are marked by two examiners excluding the supervisor. A common format is given to all examiners to maintain the consistency among evaluators.

***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 Humanities and Social Sciences are selected by the University Grants Commission (UGC) based on its national admission policy. From the inception of the DPBS the traditional recruitment and admission pay a special attention to the accepted norms of the subjects under the approval of the UGC. The special intake paves the way to encourage selecting the subjects like Pāli and Buddhist studies. Those who are registered as Special Intake students are considered as undergraduates following their compulsory relevant Subjects in DPBS. As the DPBS mainly depends on special intake of students, Z-scores of students enrolled in DPBS are lower when compared with Z-scores of faculty enrollment. However, the review team observed that knowledge, skills and attitudes of the students are improved by using various strategies such as field trips, special guest lectures, student presentations and above all dedication of the teachers. The students in the special degree programme are also encouraged by giving awards such as **Ven. Dr. Han-ik Kim Gold Medal** (The medal could be awarded the best scholar who earned the 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honours Special in Pāli Language), **Ven. Dr. Han-ik Kim Award** (This cash award of Rs.10,000.00 could be awarded the best scholar who earned the highest marks while specializing in Pāli Language) and **Mrs. Yuri Nagai Award** (This could be awarded the best scholar who earned the highest marks while specializing in Pāli Language, Buddhist Philosophy & Buddhist Culture).

Students for the Special Degree programme are selected on the basis of their performance at 1000 level semester end examinations. A sound criterion is adopted to select the most suitable students for the programme after considering their applications. While the student should succeed in all 1000 level courses in the relevant subject within the first year in one sitting and obtain a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or above for all the course units within the first year in one sitting, he or she should obtain a GPA of 3.0 or above for the courses in the relevant subject to enroll the special degree programme.

Overall results show that more than 75% percent received second class upper divisions or lower division passes. The failure rate is nil or very limited. However no first classes are recorded in the history of the department and this should be seriously taken into consideration. Graduates waiting time for a job is not known as there is no data base. Observations suggest that communication in English is poor and rectifying this weakness is not addressed properly.

***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

A standard questionnaire at the end of each semester under the guidance of the Head of the Department with the help of the Assistant Lecturers is distributed among students to obtain the student's feedback quantitatively. However these questionnaires are not analyzed to recognize and address relevant issues.

In addition to that students also provide feedback at an informal level to the head of the department and to individual staff members. Field trips and other student activities provide opportunities for obtaining feedback from students informally. Monthly faculty board meeting is another forum where student's feedback is obtained.

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

#### **4.5. Postgraduate studies**

As stated earlier, the DPBS conducts a postgraduate programme by research in the three subject areas of Pali, Buddhist Philosophy, and Buddhist Culture. Applications are invited throughout the year and only one postgraduate degree is produced so far. Research students are assigned a supervisor(s) after the approval of the proposal. There is one candidate currently registered with the Department for PhD and eight for MPhil and two for MA. In general, supervisors are from the department; however these conventional post postgraduate programmes are not very well organized. The academic staff members are well aware of the weaknesses of the existing programme and they have already established a Departmental Postgraduate Committee to address them.

The review team noted that the DPBS has adequately qualified staff to conduct such a programme: Ten out of seventeen members of the Academic staff possess postgraduate qualifications. There are five PhD holders: four have obtained their degrees from universities in India and one from a university in France. There are four MPhil holders and one MA holder. As a young Department, in 1992, also the DPBS staff and the then most outstanding Professors and Senior Lecturers have contributed in course content development, i.e. DPBS contribution to the seminars with Professors and students from Norway, France (1993,94,95); (<http://www.ru.ac.lk-CINTA>) detailed academic programmes referred by, IABU conference in Chulalongkorn University (<http://www.iabu.org> )

Most of the staff members have contributed to research publications in local and international journals, paper presentations at international conferences, textbooks and other reading materials for local readership. Many of the senior staff members have quality publications to their credit. One member has even won international awards for his research works.

Department library maintains a good collection of textbooks and other reading materials which helpful for research students. The main library contains a relatively good collection of books and journals in the subject areas of Pali, Buddhist Philosophy and Buddhist Culture. Other facilities of the department such as computers are limited for the postgraduate students.

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

#### **4.6. Peer observations**

There was no formal peer observation on teaching and learning in the DPBS. Several probationary lecturers have had the opportunity to obtain the experience when they were engaged in the Staff Development Programme. Practice of this would provide a better opportunity for both junior and senior staff to learn on the job, the practice much more effectively.

Apart from peer observation of teaching, academic staff members have the opportunity of monitoring standards of courses by moderating exam question papers and evaluating answer scripts in two stages called first marking and second marking. Regularly held staff meetings provide opportunities to share good practices among staff members and have a proper teaching-learning environment in the Department.

Apparently, peer observation is practiced to some extent in an informal way with mutual understanding. Each course unit has a course coordinator and a group of teachers (2 to 5) are involved in teaching in the same unit that can be considered as a kind of peer observation. However, lack of a formal mechanism for peer observation and lack of follow up actions were noted by the review team. The review team is in view that establishing a formal mechanism for peer observation would further help to enhance the quality of teaching.

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

#### **4.7. Skills development**

As far as subject specific skills are concerned the department provides adequate opportunities to enhance the reading, writing, and presentation skills of the students. It also provides them describing, summarizing, analyzing, critiquing, comparing, and note-taking skills. It provides translation skills, particularly from Pali to Sinhala. The programme provides students the necessary skills to read and understand the Pali canonical texts, commentaries, and classics. The programme also directs students to relate Buddhist teachings to contemporary and day to day issues and problems. It also leads students to view the content of the modern disciplines such as modern psychology, environmental studies, and politics from the Buddhism's perspective.

At the sessions of observation of lectures it was evident that lecturers have taken special efforts to incorporate new knowledge in their lectures. Staff members encourage students to improve their English and IT skills. At the same time the department and the faculty are making few arrangements to equip students with latent skills such as IT. The Faculty Computer Centre is equipped with 75 personal computers with an Internet facility. These computers are also available to the students of the Department for the development of their IT skills. Therefore students will have opportunity to improve IT skills. Students' presentation skills have been developed to a satisfactory extent. Students are able to make presentations using PowerPoint software and laptop/multimedia facility. Department has taken steps to give organizing skills to students.

During the discussion held with students the review team found that their English language skills are at a low level. Although students are exposed in compulsory English language courses, they do not have much opportunity to establish proper knowledge in this language. Proper channels are not available to enhance the English proficiency in the departmental level while it provides through the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) of the university through compulsory English course units. Because the ELTU guidance is not sufficient, the department can take necessary actions to improve the student's English proficiency.

The review team found that the students are in opinion to change the medium of instruction to English language. This could be one of the great achievements of the DPBS to create

graduates for job market. Therefore review team suggests changing the medium of instruction to English by gradual transition from first year to fourth year.

The compulsory final year dissertation provides ample opportunities for the students to develop their research skills such as data collection and data analysis.

Students regularly organize seminars and workshops for the students who are preparing for the Pirivena Final Examinations in the Southern Province. These types of extra curricula activities help them to develop and enhance their leadership qualities, organization skills and social responsibilities.

The Students are enjoying Extra- mores facilities organize by the Department and financed by the faculty i.e. Field Works and trips focused in Buddhist Arts, Buddhist Ceremonies & Rituals and Exhibition on “**Ancient Technique of Sri Lankan Manuscript Writing (Talpataka Asiriya)**”. As such DPBS organizes field trips for special degree students. Students generally undertake field surveys with the help of academic members in this field trip. Consequently a report is prepared and presentations are done by using the survey results.

Interpersonal skills such as communication skills, team work skills are imparted on students through group activities. In group activities members are given the opportunity to solve problems through brainstorming, discussing, learning and receiving and giving constructive feedback on self and peer as a group. Presentation/ communication skills are imparted on students by necessitating them to do presentations.

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

#### **4.8. Academic guidance and counseling.**

Academic guidance and counseling are operated formally and informally at department, faculty and University levels.

At university level, formally designated student counselors who are available for both academic and personal guidance and counseling are appointed. Considerable number of staff members from the DPBS is appointed for this purpose each year. The university Career Guidance unit has implemented various programmes to make the undergraduates aware of the employment opportunities available, the quality expected by the employers and acquire the skills and the knowledge necessary for responding to the labour market needs. CGU, ELTU, CMLC, SC, CC, SA. are the other student support services with direct links the DPBS.

At faculty level Students’ handbook provides information on the various degree programmes, entry requirements, Course structures, Examination regulations etc. A course unit office (COU) provides information on academic programmes and its registration. In addition, the Dean and Head of Department give an introduction to the system, general information about the degree programmes, entry requirements, information on course structures and options etc. in the orientation programme organized for new entrants. Orientation programme organized by the student unions is an alternative informative procedure for new comers and is supported by the faculty staff members.

Department-wise, a considerable number of staff is considered to be trained counselors as they followed recognized counseling courses. Academic Guidance is available to students from academic staff and other sources such as Student handbooks and C1 forms. Students are advised and informed in different opportunities : beginning of the semesters, Subject related association meetings, Organizing committee meetings for field visits and exhibitions. The collective support given to the Exhibition “ *Talpataka Asiriya*” and Field visit on “*Kataragama*” (Museum and Rituals) are the evidences for students’ progress in collective projects. Course Unit office has a direct relation with the DPBS because actual and former coordinators, Senior Lecturers of the department do a great service regarding this essential link.

A coordinator and a group of Teaching Assistants are appointed to each course unit and therefore students are able to reach them when they need any guidance regarding the programmes. A Coordinator, Course Assistant and teaching staff are assigned for each course unit during this task. Each member of the staff has been given the responsibility of guiding and observing a group of students throughout the Degree Programme, on their academic activities.

All newcomers to the department are advised at this meeting with respect to academic programmes, direction to career opportunities, and regulations at the department as well as classrooms. At the beginning of the semester information of the objectives of the courses, week by week coverage of topics and relevant reference materials are given to students via the C1 form. Students are advised on how to prepare their dissertations regularly throughout the year. Students are encouraged to meet with head of the department and / or individual staff members at an informal level for academic guidance. All staff members generally make themselves available to students for this purpose. Course lecturer can consult outside of the class room for any type of problem students are facing in their lives. The review team realized that the student-staff relationship is satisfactory.

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

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                            | Satisfactory          |
| Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods                        | Good                  |
| Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements  | Good                  |
| Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative | Good                  |
| Postgraduate Studies   | Satisfactory          |
| Peer Observation   | Satisfactory          |
| Skills Development   | Good                  |
| Academic Guidance and Counseling                                 | Good                  |

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The following strengths/good practices and weaknesses were identified by the review team

### 1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

#### Strengths/Good Practices

1. New curricular is developed in line with the new developments of the subjects.
2. Curricular revision workshops are conducted at the department level.
3. Credit system, GPA and Semester system were adopted.
4. DPBS offers courses for students from other departments which lead to interdepartmental harmony.
5. Independent Research Report is available for the undergraduates to follow in the final year which encourages the undergraduates to apply the theoretical knowledge to the real world.
6. The C1 form provides week by week breakdown of the curriculum.

#### Weaknesses

1. No outside subject specific experts involvement in syllabus revision
  2. Curriculum revision committee at Faculty level or University level is not available.
  3. The total four year curriculum carries a weight of 132 which is above the norm of 120 credits.
  4. Intended Learning Outcomes of courses are not explicit in line with the overall learning outcome
  5. English usage is not adequate.
  6. IT modules are not included in the syllabus.
- The judgment assigned to this aspect is "**Satisfactory**"

### 2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

#### Strengths/Good Practices

1. Rich with qualified and experienced staff.
2. A hand book and C1 forms are distributed among students.
3. Good learning environment is maintained as Inter-relationship between students, teachers and nonacademic staff are very high.
4. Both student centered teaching and teacher centered teaching in practice.
5. Modern teaching methods are used. Multimedia, handouts, white board, OHP, etc.
6. Course coordinator and a panel of teaching staff complete the module.
7. Innovative different types of assignments are given.
8. Practice of second marking and moderation
9. The students' attitudes towards the service delivered by academic and non academic staff in the department are very positive.
10. Students are facilitated with Field Visits and Independent Research Report

#### Weaknesses

1. All the staff members are not facilitated with a personal computer and a separate room
2. Inadequate copies of prescribed text books.
3. Lack of lecture halls
4. Modern teaching facilities are not sufficient.
5. No departmental computer lab.

6. No marking schemes are supplied for the second examiner.
7. Assessment method seems not balanced. 80% for end semester examination and 20% for continues assessments.

Judgment assigned to this aspect is "**Good**"

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

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

1. High quality students are assured by the selection criteria for special degree programmes.
2. The students in the special degree programme are encouraged by giving awards
3. Failure rate is very low or nil and more than 75% of students are getting awards
4. Knowledge, skills and attitudes of students seem considerably good.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. No first classes obtained by students
2. Communication in English is poor
3. Waiting time for a job for a graduate is not known.

Judgment assigned to this aspect is "**Good**"

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

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

1. A questionnaire is developed to evaluate the teacher.
2. Informally the Head and the staff members practice an open door policy and rapport developed between undergraduates and lecturers in the department.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. Feedback questionnaires are not analyzed.

Judgment assigned to this aspect is "**Good**"

### **5. Postgraduate Studies**

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

1. Department conducts a postgraduate programme by research in the three subject areas of Pali, Buddhist Philosophy, and Buddhist Culture.
2. There is an adequately qualified staff to conduct postgraduate programmes.
3. Many of the senior staff members have quality publications to their credit.
4. A Departmental Postgraduate Committee is established to address the weaknesses of the existing programme.
5. Library contains a relatively good collection of books and journals in the subject areas of Pali, Buddhist Philosophy and Buddhist Culture.

### Weaknesses

1. Since the start of the Postgraduate Programme in 1995, only one student has completed the degree.
2. The progress of the current postgraduate students is not satisfactory as seven out of eleven have already elapsed the maximum period for the completion of the degree which is five years.
3. The programme is offered in Sinhala Medium only.
4. The supervision of students is not equally distributed among the qualified staff.
5. The programme does not provide a formal training course on Research Methodology.

Judgment is "**Satisfactory**" with regard to this aspect.

## **6. Peer Observation**

### Strengths/Good Practices

- Staff development programme paves the way for sharing good practices
- Moderation and second marking system is in practice.
- Departmental meetings are regularly held and make ground for sharing views of staff members.
- A group of teachers (2 to 5) are involved in teaching in the same unit that can be considered as a kind of peer observation.

### Weaknesses

1. No formal peer observation system.
2. Peers views are not taken seriously.

Judgment is "**Satisfactory**" with regard to this aspect.

## **7. Skills Development**

### Strengths/Good Practices

1. The undergraduate programme provides adequate opportunities to enhance the reading, writing, and presentation skills of the students.
2. It also provides them describing, summarizing, analyzing, critiquing, comparing, and note-taking skills.
3. It provides translation skills, particularly from Pali to Sinhala.
4. The programme provides students the necessary skills to read and understand the Pali canonical texts, commentaries, and classics.
5. The compulsory final year dissertation provides ample opportunities for the students to develop their research skills such data collection and data analysis.
6. The programme also directs students to relate Buddhist teachings to contemporary and day to day issues and problems.
7. It also leads students to view the content of the modern disciplines such as modern psychology, environmental studies, and politics from the Buddhism's perspective.
8. Department has taken steps to give organizing skills to students.
9. Students' presentation skills have been developed to a satisfactory extent.
10. Students/staff regularly do community services such as organizing seminars and workshops for the students who are preparing for the Pirivena Final Examinations in the Southern Province, teaching Dhamma Schools in the area and preaching and discussing of the Dhamma in the Ruhuna Radio channel.

### Weaknesses

1. IT skills are not improved as required.
2. ELTD courses seems not effective
3. English communication is poor.

Judgment assigned to this aspect is "**Good**"

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

### Strengths/Good Practices

1. Orientation program conducted by the university for fresh students gives familiar environment in the University.
2. Making available the undergraduates, at the beginning of the Programme, a copy of the Faculty hand book which contains the details of the degree programmes conducted by the faculty.
3. A student counseling programme is available in the university in which several members of the Department perform duties as student counselors.
4. CGU, ELTU, CMLC, SC, CC, SA. are the other student support services with direct links the DPBS.
5. Academic Guidance is available to students from academic staff and other sources such as Student handbooks and C1 forms.
6. Kind of formal training for staff on the student counseling and guidance are available. Trained counselors are available in the Department.
7. Good rapport is maintained between the academic staff and students.

### Weaknesses

1. No confidential place is allocated in the department for personal counseling.

Judgment assigned is '**Good**' for this aspect

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made by the Review Team for further improvement of the programme being offered by the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies as the Review Team felt that they will be useful:

1. Marking schemes can be provided to second examiners
2. It is advisable to change the medium of instruction to English by gradual transition from first year to fourth year. In addition ELTU and the Department can collectively prepare effective modules in English.
3. Students' feedback forms should be analyzed to evaluate the teacher.
4. A formal peer observation method and follow up actions would help increasing the productivity of the department.
5. Maintain a data base for passed out students so that waiting time for a job for a graduate can be calculated.
6. Take steps to rectify the remedy of not having first classes by students in the history of the DPBS.
7. Availability of one year post graduate diploma or a certificate courses in Pali/ Buddhist Studies /Buddhist Culture or/and an MA degree programme to be obtained by

coursework would enhance the current postgraduate programme of the Department as it will help to attract many students in the Southern province in particular and give the students an opportunity to widen their horizon while at the same time creating opportunities for the academic staff to expand their scope and extend their expertise further. .

8. It is urgent that a research methodology course be introduced to the currently registered students to straighten things.
9. The Departmental Higher Degrees Committee should meet regularly and keep minutes of the meetings.
10. It is recommended to conduct postgraduate degree programmes in English medium.
11. The staff members are encouraged to publish their works in English and also in Refereed Journals in Sri Lanka and abroad.
12. The staff members are also encouraged to present their research in national and international conferences.
13. The Department could offer at least one course to its special degree students in the computer lab using the IT facilities.
14. The Department could also take measures to teach at least some topics or modules of the courses using IT and other modern teaching facilities and methods so that students could learn from, at least, seeing.
15. The Pali students must be given the skills of editing Pali texts. This could be done by introducing a course unit on Basic Skills in Editing Pali Texts.
16. Pali students must also be directed to read Pali texts in Roman, Burmese, and Thai scripts.
17. Opportunities to develop skills in mind training and cultivation must be given to the students. This could be done by offering a course unit on Buddhist meditation with a strong practical component. This could also be done in a bigger way once in while for the all students of the faculty and the university.
18. The Department could take special interest in recommending to the university to establish a separate space with at least some basic exercising facilities for the use of the Buddhist monks to maintain their health and wellbeing.
19. The current English Language teaching at the faculty is not satisfactory as students find them irrelevant to what they study. Therefore, ELTU could develop teaching materials incorporating the course contents from the subject disciplines of the students.
20. The Department is also encouraged to offer courses in English medium. This could be done gradually first year mixing both Sinhala and English within one course, second and third years some of the courses in English, and in the final year all courses in English.
21. The Department could maintain a wall magazine to accommodate the creative output of its students.
22. The Department is also encouraged to publish a Department Journal with the articles from both the staff and students.
23. The Faculty Computer Centre faces congestion due to the high demand from all academic departments. A greater number of machines installed in an additional space would remedy the situation.
24. As DPBS is established from the inception without basic facilities, in a temporary location (ELTU Premises) the space is not sufficient to conduct study programmes smoothly. A Library room and a Seminar room would be the urgent needs for the expansion of the department.

## **7. ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1. AGENDA FOR THE REVIEW VISIT**

#### **Day 1: 22/04/2009**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 08.30 – 09.00 | Private meeting of the Review Team with Prof. Colin Peiris, Quality Assurance Specialist                                     |
| 09.00 – 09.30 | Meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Chairman/ Quality Assurance Unit, Dean/ HSS and Head of Department |
| 09.30 – 10.00 | Review team discusses the agenda for the visit with HOD  |
| 10.00 – 10.30 | Tea & Meeting with Department staff  |
| 10.30 – 11.30 | Dept. Presentation on the Self – Evaluation Report   |
| 11.30 – 12.30 | Discussion   |
| 12.30 – 13.00 | Observe Documents  |
| 13.00 – 14.00 | Lunch  |
| 14.00 – 15.00 | Observing Department Facilities  |
| 15.00 – 16.00 | Meeting with Department Academic Staff   |
| 16.00 – 17.00 | Meeting with Undergraduate Students  |
| 17.00 – 17.30 | Brief Meeting of Reviewers   |

#### **Day 2: 23/04/2009**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 08.00 – 09.00 | Observing Teaching – Lecture           |
| 09.00 – 10.00 | Observing Teaching – Lecture           |
| 10.00 – 11.00 | Observing Teaching – Lecture           |
| 11.00 – 11.30 | Observing Teaching – Lecture           |
| 11.30 – 12.30 | Meeting with Department Academic Staff |
| 12.30 – 13.30 | Lunch                                  |
| 13.30 – 14.00 | Meeting with Dept. Non- Academic Staff |
| 14.00 – 14.30 | Observing Teaching – Lecture           |
| 14.30 – 15.30 | Observing Student Presentations        |
| 15.30 – 16.30 | Observing Facilities                   |
| 16.30 – 17.00 | Meeting of Reviewers                   |

#### **Day 3: 24/04/2009**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 08.30 – 09.30 | Observing Documents                     |
| 09.30 – 10.00 | Other Facilities (Library)              |
| 10.00 – 11.00 | Observing Documents                     |
| 11.00 – 12.00 | Meeting with Head & Staff for Reporting |
| 12.00 – 13.00 | Lunch                                   |
| 13.00 – 17.00 | Report – Writing                        |