

# INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT

## UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA



14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010

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## **1. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS REVIEW CONTEXT**

The University of Ruhuna, first established as a Ruhuna campus of the former University of Sri Lanka and later elevated to a fully fledged University in 1984, is the only university in the Southern Province. It is a dispersed university with 3 faculties situated some distance from the main university complex situated in Wellamadama, Matara. The three faculties, namely Agriculture, Engineering and Medicine are situated at Mapalana, Hapugala and Karapitiya respectively. This has made management of student unrest easier, but administratively, it has created difficulties. Nevertheless, this has enabled the University of Ruhuna to establish innovative administrative and financial processes to decentralize university management. It has also opened-up opportunities for distinctive and independent development of faculties.

In addition to the three faculties mentioned above, Faculties of Science, Humanities and Social Sciences and Fisheries and Marine Science and Technology are located within the main University complex at Wellamadama, Matara. The University of Ruhuna has the only Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology in Sri Lanka. This faculty, which is in its infant stage yet, is expected to become a pivotal thrust in future scientific research and development in Fisheries, Marine Sciences and Oceanography and related technology.

The university has a unique architectural design – the heritage of the world-renowned Sri Lankan architect Mr. Geoffrey Bawa. Mr. Geoffrey Bawa has left a distinctive mark in the architectural landscape of Sri Lanka and is a focus of study internationally. As a result, it was reported, that the University of Ruhuna is visited regularly by students of architecture the world over. It is commendable that the University authorities are conscious of this unique architecture and try to preserve its purity by ensuring that new constructions would comply with the old one.

The University of Ruhuna has grown over the years to become the 4<sup>th</sup> ranking University among universities in Sri Lanka according to the World Wide Education Net, Webometrics (World Universities' ranking on the web: Top South Asia) and Cybermetrics Lab (Global and Regional ranking of Indian Subcontinent region. CCHS-CSIC, Madrid, Spain, 2008). Only the Universities of Moratuwa, Colombo and Peradeniya have been ranked above the University of Ruhuna. The massive development activities currently taking place in the Southern Province with the Hambanthota International Hub Development (HIHD) programme and associated activities would undoubtedly provide a good opportunity for University of Ruhuna to elevate itself to a greater height. The University is aware of this and the Vice Chancellor has been appointed as a member of HIHD Steering Committee to ensure the formal linkage of University with the new development activities.

The Review Team noted the enthusiasm of the University to assure quality of its programmes. This is evidenced by the fact that all Subjects Review (except the newly established Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology) has been completed at the time the Institutional Review team visited the University. The compiled reports of all reviews were made available to the team. The commitment of the University to its quality assurance process is exemplified further by the fact that the Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor are directly involved with the quality assurance programme by serving as the Chairman and Secretary, respectively of the International Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) of the University.

The Institutional Review Team consisted of 6 members as listed below.

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The Self Evaluation Report (SER) was made available to each member of the team well ahead of their visit to the University for the review process. The panel visited the University and conducted the review from 14/06/2010 to 18/05/2010. The review team was very satisfied with the agenda, which is given in the annex and facilities provided by the University. The review team is of the opinion that all those who took part in the review took the entire review process very seriously and actively participated in the proceedings. This is also an indication of the desire and commitment that the University of Ruhuna has shown in ensuring the quality assurance process.

## **2. REVIEW TEAM'S VIEW OF THE SELF EVALUATION REPORT**

Chapter 1 contains a brief history of the University, its vision, mission and goals, and a brief statement about its distinctive characteristics. Although the title of the Chapter has the words "Corporate Planning" no details are given about the processes of planning, implementation and review in the body.

Chapter 2 contains a comprehensive description of the Financial Resources and Management. The overview may have been made complete by the inclusion of some data on student numbers and the output of graduates. As a result it is hard to find the relationship between the numbers of students and cost per student in the self evaluation report. These necessarily go together with financial information to inform us about efficiency and effectiveness of programmes and investments.

The Chapter 3 deals with research. The university objectives on research are mentioned while the research policy and procedures are not well described. Funding for research and research support given to staff are described in some detail. However, not much information was provided on university's objectives on research, completion of research projects and external recognition.

Chapter 4 of the SER deals with quality management and administration. Quality policies and strategies and quality management mechanisms are described in detail in this Chapter. Quality assurance process of the University of Ruhuna is described in Chapter 5. Quality assurance Strategy and action plan, academic standards of courses and awards, and review processes, matters relating to staffing and communication procedure of the university, learning infrastructure and student support are well described in this chapter.

A substantial description of external degree programmes is given in Chapter 7. It is clear that the University is very conscious of the need for comparability of the degrees offered internally and externally; and makes every effort to provide services to the external degree students within the resource and structural constraints of the system. Chapter 8 has captured numerous linkages that the University has established for its outreach activities.

### **3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Corporate Plan of the University, under all five goals, has many strategies to established, improve and ensure quality and standards. The Council including all Deans, Directors, Heads of departments and academic staff as well as the administrative staff were aware of the existence of the Corporate Plan. However, the goals strategies and objectives and activities in the Corporate Plan are not consciously referred to or discussed in the planning of the curricula and courses. This is an area that needs to be improved. In addition, the discussion of the Corporate Plan at the Council at regular intervals would provide an indication to the “University Authorities” of the progress made and accordingly would help guide the decision making process.

The Council of the University is responsible and accountable for the overall administrative and management quality of all activities of the University. Three mechanisms are in place to ensure that the University is conducting its operations in a responsible manner. Firstly, the University has to prepare its annual report which is approved by the Council and scrutinized by the Auditor General. Secondly, the matters discussed in the annual report and other issues of interests are further scrutinized at the Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE), a subcommittee of the Parliament of Sri Lanka. Thirdly, the University budget outlays and achievements are discussed at the UGC and the Treasury for the determination of expenditure planning.

The University Senate is responsible for quality assurance and improvement of the academic programme which include approval of curricula, bylaws, rules and regulations pertaining to examinations and evaluations. The Faculty Board are responsible for academic administration while academic departments are responsible for delivering and evaluating the teaching programmes. The quality of the academic programme thus lies primarily with the individual academic department. This is what is covered under the Subject Review conducted by the quality Assurance Programme of the IRQUE project. Though the procedures, rules and regulations are available, a “University Calendar” has not yet been prepared. It was reported to the Team that the University is in the process of compiling a University Calendar.

The Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) has been established in June 2008, with the Vice Chancellor as the Chair of the Unit and the Deputy Vice Chancellor as its secretary ensuring the leadership and the commitment of the University of Ruhuna at the highest level. The objectives and the responsibilities of the IQAU have been drawn up. The members are the chairpersons of the faculty level Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC). The faculties have also taken steps to appoint members to the IQAC. The IQAU has been instrumental in organizing workshops to promote departments to submit the self evaluation reports for review. The planned bimonthly meetings of the IQAU have not been held as regularly as they might have been nor have the IQAC at faculty level taken on activities for quality assurance. This Unit has the potential to support the QA activities if the university in many ways and needs to be explored and streamlined.

## **4. FINDINGS ON THE EIGHT ASPECTS OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW**

### **4.1 University Goals and Corporate Planning**

The University of Ruhuna has clearly traceable origins and a path of progress dating from the commencement of programme in institutions that were started as affiliations to already well established national universities. It is now firmly established as a national university with five highly recognized Faculties of Agriculture, Humanities and Social Sciences, Science, Medicine, and of Engineering. Two other faculties have been formed by drawing on already existing resources and are in the process of growing into full-fledged entities with infrastructure and other resources to deliver academic programmes that may be considered as essential in the economy of modern Sri Lanka. These are: Faculty of Management and Finance (established in 2003), and Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science & Technology (established in 2005).

The Vision Statement as embodied in the Corporate Plan is a very meaningful and realistic one. It is not burdened with unrealistic words “best” and “international” that are found in statements of many other similar institutions. The stress on the Sri Lankan identity is laudable in a national context where the need of the hour is for graduates who can, not only serve as public servants and teachers, but also function as entrepreneurs who can create opportunities for others and contribute to a high national productivity.

The Corporate Plan that was made available to the Team is in effect a very comprehensive Strategic Plan that has much relevance for an institution that is geared for growth to meet the needs of the Southern Region in which the Government is investing heavily for the development of modern infrastructure. It reflects clear thinking and a realistic assessment of the Situation Analysis. The review team verified, during discussions with the officers and the academics, that there is broad-based ownership of the Plan and that it were prepared through a participatory process. The group of Council members met by the Team confirmed their acceptance of the Corporate Plan.

The contents of the Plan have been informed to the entire university through the Deans, Heads of Departments and the Assistant Registrars. Based on the Corporate Plan the Faculties prepared respective operational plans for implementation. However, every Faculty encountered barriers to their full implementation due to shortage of financial resources. The shortage of academic staff with experience and higher qualifications was also given as a reason for shortfall. Another factor that militated against implementation of the Corporate Plan in all Faculties, except two, was the heavy workload on the academics. The use of the Corporate Plan at departmental and faculty level and at administrative level in guiding the planning was not apparent. This area could be streamlined for effective achievement of the university goal.

Although the University Council had ratified the Corporate Plan after its formulation, it had not been informed periodically of the extent to which the objectives were being attained. The Group of Council members was of the view that progress should be reported periodically. The Team considers this reporting as important.

## 4.2 Financial Resources and Management

Readings of the Auditor General's report and listening to the Internal Auditor led the Team to the conclusion that the University has an effective and robust Financial Management system in place. This was effectively described to the Team by the Bursar and his Deputy. Preparation of the Budget based on the requirements for implementation of the Corporate Plan was a better approach than using historical figures because the intention of the university was not to maintain a steady operation but bring about significant and planned change. This approach also provided information to the Bursar to apportion funds to the Faculties without entering into fresh negotiations with the Deans when the funds were actually allocated by the University Grants Commission.

A scheme of issuing internal administrative circulars by the Vice-Chancellor is a progressive step. In addition the Finance Committee has been reorganized and functions more effectively. The Team also noted that the effective interventions made by the members of the Council to instil good practices in financial management in looking into various aspects and helping the University Administration to improve procedures. These progressive steps may have contributed to a drop in the number of audit queries, as reported to the Team.

The setting up of Faculty Procurement Committees with strict adherence to approval limits has streamlined the use of funds to support the academic programmes. This decentralization is seen as very necessary due to the distance separating three faculties from the central campus and from each other. It is also a demonstration of the value of effective delegation discipline and understanding. Another ingredient that ensures the success of the arrangement is the effort taken by the Bursar and his Deputy to conduct workshops for: Heads of Departments to explain and discuss their financial responsibilities; Administration staff to educate them regarding process re-engineering; Clerical staff for training in record keeping and file maintenance.

Aside from the arrangement for faculty-based procurements, all other financial transactions and controls must necessarily take cognizance of the spread of the university between four locations. Two new faculties that have been carved out of two existing ones require not only reallocation and sharing of resources on a new basis but also significant new investments in buildings and other infrastructure. The immediate challenge is optimizing of the use of existing resources and assets to meet the needs of an increased intake of students. Since there is no place to discuss Assets Management within the reporting structure given by the QAA Council we are inserting the following observation at this point of our Report, especially because the Internal Auditor informed that utilization of classrooms are generally low.

The University should consider bringing all the classrooms and lecture theatres/rooms under one authority rather than assign these to particular Heads of Departments. This is an aspect of Assets Management that is often overlooked due to the interest of Faculties in "ownership" of spaces. Whilst laboratories may be assigned to Departments because these have specialized equipment that cannot be moved around conveniently and also need attention of competent staff, there is no logic in narrowly assigning classrooms and lecture rooms/theatres. The finding of the Internal Auditor about low utilization factors and the difficulty encountered by some departments in finding rooms are evidence of the unsuitability of this practice. During the meetings the review team had with staff and students the difficulties encountered in getting venues for academic programme was highlighted. The concept of "general ownership" of rooms under the Registrar should be examined

purposefully and entered into by an initial zoning of the main campus and listing of the rooms. Specialists in Operations Research will be able to advise the Registrar in preparing a computer programme for the allocation of rooms to meet the timetable based demands.

### **4.3 Research**

Mission statement of the university corporate plan makes a specific reference to Research and development, indicating the university's commitment to research. The University has stated their objectives, policy and an action plan on research and development in goal 1 and goal 2 of the corporate plan.

The university has a well established mechanism for programme approval and conducting research programmes, (MPhil, PhD, DM and taught Master degree programmes) and monitoring research continuously through various statutory committees of the university. The scale and nature of the research activities in all faculties have developed considerably since the university was created. The award of postgraduate degrees has shown a progressive increase during the past few years.

There are adequate physical resources, space, equipment and human resources available for conducting meaningful research in all faculties. The enthusiasm shown by staff members for research programme is commendable. The record of research in terms of both national and international publications is impressive. Some faculties ex: Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Science has some important research innovations patented, which have been recognized nationally.

Some department of the university has received adequate and impressive funding for research through various national and international sources. Many collaborative programmes with foreign universities have helped the university to train its academic staff at postgraduate level.

The university has adequate mechanisms of publishing and presentation of research. It publishes 3 peer reviewed journals (National and international) and 04 proceedings annually.

In addition to research based post graduate degrees the university conducts many taught post graduate programmes amounting to 14. The university has already received the Senate and Council approval to establish a Graduate Faculty (Faculty of Graduate Studies), in keeping with the current trend, in order to effectively control all of their Graduate Degree Programmes.

The university Senate has decided to offer compulsory course units in basic statistics and research methodology to all post graduate students, to improve the quality of research based postgraduate degrees. This can be considered as a good practice.

However some students of postgraduate degree programmes expressed their dissatisfaction, regarding the delay in releasing results, and undue extension of the duration of the courses. Lack of adequate funding was a major concern of some students who self-sponsor their projects.

It appears to the review team that only certain departments of some faculties have received a “good” grade for their research (based on subject reviews). It may be necessary to examine the reasons for others not getting this “good” grade. There were many constraints that the staff is facing in conducting research. Unavailability of time for research due to heavy teaching load due to course unit system, inadequate allocation of funds from the government, poor financial status of local funding agencies also contributes to this problem. However, the Team noted the enthusiasm of few staff who secured funding from outside sources and proactively worked towards establishing link programmes with Foreign Universities.

The review team is of the opinion that research in the University of Ruhuna is progressing well.

#### **4.4 Quality Management and Administration**

As given in Section 3, the institutional arrangements with standards and procedures are in place to ensure quality the services provided by the University. It is important to make sure that there is very close collaboration and understanding between the Academic Departments and the Administrative/Financial Divisions of the University so that the activities of the former would be facilitated well by the latter to serve the students.

The quality standards of the students who are registering in the University are well beyond the control of the University as the UGC determines the admissions. However, to a certain extent, the quality of the University is reflected by the demand made by applications of merit students. There were opinions expressed during the review that the quality of students to the Universities could be enhanced by increasing the proportion of merit students in the admission policy of the UGC.

The appointment of academic staff is undertaken, as any other University in Sri Lanka, according to the recruitment criteria of the relevant UGC circular which guarantees the selection of quality staff. The procedure adopted and the appointment of selection committees are in par with any other established university.

The university has established Staff Development Centre (SDC) to help train newly recruited staff primarily on teaching methodology, research and management aspects. The Certificate Course in Professional Development in Higher Education (CCPDHE) offered as a mandatory course for newly recruited staff would undoubtedly help to improve their quality of teaching.

However, there are few constraints in ensuring the availability of adequate, qualified staff to conduct academic programmes at the University. Some faculties, such as Agriculture, Sciences and Medical have qualified staff whilst, other faculties have problems. The Faculty of Engineering finds it difficult to recruit academic staff. All the professor posts and more than 50% academic positions are found to be vacant. On the other hand, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences have very few vacant positions, though the majority of staff does not have required postgraduate qualifications. These limitations could have a serious impact on the quality of education and research. Providing an adequate remuneration package to attract qualified staff and providing postgraduate training facilities would be required to address these issues in the long run which become the responsibility of the UGC to take appropriate policy measures at the national level.

The review teams finds that the administrative and financial divisions of the University led by Registrar and Bursar respectively provide an effective service to guarantee smooth functioning of the University. The disadvantages of having three faculties away from the main university administrative complex have been circumvented to a greater extent by team work. The innovative administrative arrangements with delegation of responsibilities could be an example to other universities which has some of the faculties/units away from the main university.

The review team observed few problems associated with the administrative staff. There are few vacancies which need to be filled early. For example, the Faculty of Agriculture located at Mapalana does not have a regular administrative head. Instead, the Farm Manager is serving as an acting registrar for more than two years. The senior administrative staff provides in-house training to newly recruited administrative staff. In addition, the SDC and various other units organize workshops and seminars for non-academic staff. However, more formal training based on need assessment would help to improve their performances.

#### **4.5 Quality Assurance**

##### **Quality improvement**

All the department of its established faculties and the library have completed the quality assurance reviews and have received the reports. The Vice Chancellor has taken steps to request the Deans to have QA matters as an agenda item at the Faculty Board meetings and specifically take up matters needing improvement indicated in the QA review reports that have been received. Further, the specific plans and requests of departments to implement the recommendations for improvement have been forwarded to the Vice Chancellor by many departments, but not all, as evidenced by the Minutes of the Faculty Board meeting of the Faculty of Medicine. Good practices that are in place have been documented by the different departments and have been sent to the VC.

The issues related to the implementation of the recommendations need to be discussed and appropriate actions taken at the meetings of the IQAU, the Senate and the Council. It is also evident that many departments and study programmes have also taken steps to implement activities to address the shortcomings identified, especially in the area of obtaining student feedback, peer evaluation and introducing internship and industrial placements.

Curriculum review and revisions in general have not made much progress in the Faculties of Medicine, and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Faculty of Management and Finance, and Agriculture have initiated the process of review and held meetings with stakeholders. The students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences expressed their deep concern regarding the curriculum they follow currently which they said has been in place for a long time. Some expressed the view that the first year curriculum was not substantially different from that of the GCE (Advanced Level). Though appreciative of the commitment of the academic staff, the students of the Faculty of Management and Finance expressed the view that some new courses, which would improve their employability, could have been introduced.

Although syllabus revision (sic) was a corporate objective only the Faculty of Engineering had a review cycle. It used a broad-based consultative process that involved practitioners, and meetings with representatives of professional bodies. At the time of the visit by the Team preparations were under way for implementation of the revised syllabus by the 2012.

The Team notes that Faculties had introduced new degree programmes and new course units, rather than revise existing curricula. Our comment is that the existing programmes and their units require serious review and revision as much as the introduction of new programmes and units.

The review team noted that these issues related to quality issues as envisioned in the Corporate Plan and highlighted in the QA review reports could be more systematically addressed at the relevant levels i.e. department, faculty and Senate and systematic monitoring of implementation is needed at each level with the IQAU, the Senate and Council at the apex, monitoring progress and supporting the implementation. We feel that the IQAU could monitor the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the QA review reports. They could also bring some of the issues that need to be brought to the notice of higher authorities outside the university such as, the CVCD, UGC and the Ministry of Higher Education for improvement. There were expressions of dissatisfaction with usefulness and effectiveness of QA review as there were no discernible solutions to issues that had already been raised. This we feel is important, not only for the improvement of the quality of study programmes and the quality of students but also for the credibility for the entire QA process. This was clear from the views expressed by some of the academic staff and the students.

#### **Academic Standards of programmes and awards**

Academic standards of programmes and awards are explicitly addressed at multiple points and levels through different processes and mechanisms.

All faculties have committees, such as curriculum committees, curriculum development and evaluation committees or, programme/course coordinators committees to discuss and make recommendations to the Faculty Boards regarding all aspects of the curricula. Changes planned to the existing curricula, learning outcomes, assessment systems, teaching learning methods and settings are discussed initially at the department level, then at curriculum committees, curriculum development and evaluation committees or, programme/course coordinators committees. The decisions and recommendations are then forwarded to the Faculty Board for recommendations. Feedback given at each stage is useful for fine tuning the proposed change. The recommendations from the faculty are then sent to the Senate for final approval. Detailed evaluation proposed new programmes before submission to Senate does not appear to take place at the University level. This could create proliferation of similar courses from many departments within the same university. An academic development and planning committee, a subcommittee of Senate, which exists in some other universities could review these new courses and avoid such problems. This process would be useful and is worth being considered by the university.

During our discussions the difficulties of drawing up timetables was highlighted. This is a result of the proliferation of course units in narrow specializations, especially in the last two semesters. While it is true that traditional disciplines have given rise to areas of specialization in which postgraduate research students qualify, it is not necessary to pack these into undergraduate programmes.

Even in developed countries the undergraduate programmes retain their “generic” character. The specializations are introduced during a year of postgraduate studies. Although lecturers returning after a postgraduate research degree programme would have specialized in some narrow area, they should consider themselves competent to teach a range of undergraduate courses/modules. Every faculty member must desist from offering specialized modules that

attract less than 15 students. At all other times they should fit themselves in as teachers of generic modules offered to an entire batch.

The moderation of questions and scrutiny by examination committees are good practices for improvement of standards. However, there is no university policy or practice on independent double marking and marking by external examiners. These are being practiced by some but not other course units/ departments/study programmes. The issues related to not adopting these can be identified as, lack of staff, large numbers of students, a large number of examinations, specially with the large number of course units, and the delays experienced and expected when scripts are sent to external examiners. Some also were not convinced for the need and usefulness for the external marking and for double marking with the existence practice of moderation of papers and model answers. These practices were also not consistent. However, double marking, at least internally at the Department level need to be practiced as a University policy.

Except in the Faculties of Medicine and Agriculture the academics of other Faculties were unduly loaded due to the continuous assessment arrangements built into the semester system due to their having to mark assignments and tests. The Faculty of Agriculture had reduced this load considerably by the use of computer-based tests made possible by the introduction of a Learning Management System. The other faculties too should seriously consider this option because the heavy marking-load, although seasonal, could prevent the staff from engaging in other more gainful academic activities. The computer-based tests have the potential to be more effective tests of learning and for providing more useful feedback to students.

One of the most commendable practices of the University is to provide an opportunity to students to verify their marks by formally requesting it with a nominal payment. This practice would undoubtedly help to improve transparency and the confidence of the evaluation system, though, only a small fraction of students used this facility.

All research degrees, research projects supervisors and examiners are approved by at different levels in the university system.

Some academic programmes, are accredited by external statutory or professional bodies. For example, the programmes offered by the Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Engineering are accredited by the Sri Lanka Medical Council and the Institute of Engineers of Sri Lanka respectively. This besides improving the employment prospects would also lead to sustained improvement to quality and relevance. All degree programmes need to consider this approach when and where feasible.

The subject benchmark statements as well as others pertaining to teaching learning, assessments, postgraduate degrees, student feedback etc., issued by the QAA Council of the UGC provide guidelines for quality of study programmes and should be adopted and used for improvement of quality.

### **The regulatory framework**

The regulatory framework highlighted in the self evaluation report is in place. The regulations for examinations, the guidelines for external examination as well as for postgraduate degrees for supervision of research leading to research degrees have been drawn

up. The University has decided to strengthen its postgraduate degrees programmes by establishing a faculty of graduate studies.

A manual of procedures for conduct of university examination has been developed. The criteria for conducting examinations and release of results have also been drawn up in 2009. These are useful for the assurance of standards and good practices related to examinations. Regarding external examination explicit criteria for appointment of examiners are neither in place nor a system for declaration due to conflicts of interest. The university needs to take matters related to conduct of external examinations also into consideration and draw up explicit guidelines and regulations. A system of incentive payments for timely submission of marks has been set up to speed up the release of examination results from external examinations.

### **Validation and approval of new courses**

The autonomy and freedom given to faculties and departments to commence new programme by the university is commendable. The process in place is already discussed in section 8.2.2. It was clear from the discussion held with both the staff and the students that there were concerns regarding inadequacy of staff, physical resources, examiners to implement courses whether they be new, existing or external. In the evaluation of new courses besides their academic merit and quality, availability of resources and time too need to be considered as they have a direct impact on student learning, the inability to use better teaching learning methods and settings. A Senate advisory committee or a subcommittee would be able to undertake a full evaluation of a new course as recommended in section 8.2.2.

### **Student admission**

The admission of students as is the case in all other state sector universities of Sri Lanka are carried out by the UGC. The selection of students for specialization is based on their performance during the core course and is decided by the faculty board. The highest standard and quality of students for specialization programmes are thus guaranteed.

The admission of students to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences are based on all island merit and are, therefore, among academically the best students at the GCE Advanced Level. The dissatisfaction expressed by the students of this Faculty with the regard to the academic programme that they receive has to be viewed seriously because of their potential for achievement. Ensuring that such students benefits from curricula which are developed, updated and delivered with a view to ensuring employability is hence the responsibility of the Faculty and the University.

### **Staffing**

The University follows the circulars, procedures and guidelines laid down by the UGC and the Council for recruitment of staff and for promotion. The student staff ratio appears to be in keeping with the UGC recommended norms except in the Faculty of Management. Although the recommended ratio of staff to students is 1:18 in this Faculty the current ratio is 1:43 due to the unfilled cadre posts.

The academic staffs were over worked with the large number of course units and examinations that are being conducted. This also hampers the implementation of more student centred learning activities along with other more desirable teaching methods which would improve staff student interaction as well as lead to the development of generic skills. The small group learning is not implemented in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences both due to large number of students and the relatively low number of staff. It

appears that realistic staffing is essential for the implementation of desirable teaching learning methods such as student centred learning for quality improvement and to offer more course units in keeping with the demands of the workplace. The staff norms set by the UGC at a time the curricula were mainly lecture based have not been revised. This is an issue that is faced by many other universities and this has to be brought to the notice of the UGC and addressed early.

In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences a large percentage of staff are temporary and have remained so for several years. This issue has to be sorted to improve the quality of the study programme.

The postgraduate training has to a large extent been based on the collaborative programmes with foreign universities and research institutes and led to Masters and PhDs. Staff, especially from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science expressed their concerns at the lack of opportunity for overseas postgraduate training such as Masters and PhDs. It was also the view of the Heads of Departments and Deans and the Vice Chancellor that overseas exposure was essential for improvement of the quality of academic staff.

Another concern expressed both by staff and students was the lack of staff with some specific postgraduate qualifications and expertise. These could adversely affect the quality of some of the programmes.

## **4.6 Learning Resources and Student Supports**

### **Learning Infrastructure**

#### ***i. Lecture rooms***

Internationally renowned, well designed buildings at the main campus at Wellamadama, Medical Faculty at Karapitiya, Engineering Faculty at Hapugala and Agriculture Faculty at Mapalana along with qualified and experienced academic staff make the teaching learning environment for over 6000 students sufficiently good. Although the newly established faculties of Management and Fisheries and Marine Science & Technology do not have separate buildings and lack of infrastructure for conducting examinations and external degree programmes other faculties share their spaces to manage the degree programmes successfully. The review team noted that there were some complaints about infrastructure support for learning, which includes inadequacy of academic staff, lecture rooms, library facilities, computers, accommodation and trained administrative staff. For example, Faculty of Management divided students into two groups and gives instructions in both in Sinhala and English due to the space problem and some lectures in the Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty are held for more than 300 students with little tutorial and practical support.

#### ***ii. Library***

There is a well equipped central library at Wellamadama and sufficiently equipped separate libraries at other premises. The main library has adequate physical resources, which includes a small auditorium (80 seats), a reading room (150 seats), the university museum, and the multimedia resources centre (25 seats). Generally a collection of books numbering about 140,000 and about 300 journals etc. and e-resources in Main Library are satisfactory and link between branch libraries and the main library are well maintained.

The services of library including reference (Email, Telephone and Fax reference services) lending, inter library loan, awareness services, user education programmes, web site with online resources are available. The library provides facilities for World Wide Web search. The library website also provides access to the CD collection in the library and the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). Isuru library system which could be used for feeding bibliographic data searching in Sinhala and English is praiseworthy.

Services provided by Multimedia Centre, research consultation, offering course modules for students and involvements in university publications by the library staff are commendable. During the orientation programme of the new entrants, the library staff organizes programmes in order to familiarize them with the use of the library and the services provided by it. Therefore resources, services, networking and contribution to academic output of the library is satisfactory.

The course modules on library skills are offered only for science faculty students; it is advisable to offer same courses to students of all faculties. Non-availability of a binding section and unsatisfactory preservation and conservation activities of the library resources are considered as a weakness. It seems that library staff has little communication with the academic staff as they are not representing the faculty boards except the Faculty of Engineering and not participating in curricular revisions etc.

### ***iii IT Facilities***

The University Computer Unit, Department of Computer Science and other Computer Units of faculties offer many computer and information technology related services such as maintaining and upgrading the Fibre Optic Backbone, providing Email, Web and other Internet services, maintenance and service of computers, designing and handling the Local Area Networks (LAN) and consultation services for IT related activities to the whole university community and other government and private sector organizations in the Southern region.

The university has other IT facilities such as video conferencing VOIP gateway, Learning Management System (LMS) and web casting. It has established an e-culture within the university community in order to reduce paper based communication. The university offers several IT courses to the university community through the Computer Unit to uplift the computer literacy within the university.

Inadequate computer facilities available in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, compared to the large number of students in that faculty, is a major constraint for conducting practical sessions on IT for those students. Video conferencing is a good new strategy; however it is limited to some faculties. The overall university IT strategy is satisfactory.

### ***iv. The English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU)***

The English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) is established in each faculty. However the department mainly depends on a visiting staff as number of permanent staff is not sufficient. There is a compulsion for students to acquire knowledge in English, by getting a pass grade to complete the degree. However, the adequacy of services provided to students to gain such knowledge is questionable due to inadequate qualified staff, lack of small lecture rooms for group work and unattractive teaching methods and instructors. In the Faculties of Medicine, Science, Engineering, Agriculture and Fisheries and Marine Science and Technology, the students are more exposed to English. In all these Faculties the medium of instruction is English. As such the students of these faculties have better communication skills in English than the students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Management and

Finance. The review team is of the view that the students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Management and Finance should be provided with more facilities to develop their communication skills by way of getting more exposure to English in small groups with highly trained instructors. They could also be encouraged to do at least part of their course in English. The ten weeks intensive course for new comers should be organized in effective manner.

### **Student support and guidance**

It is commendable that appointment of Deputy vice chancellor has helped to coordinates all the student support activities and provides very important guidance services. Service units consist of medical centre, student counselling service, student welfare services, Department of Physical Education, hostels, Career Guidance Unit, canteens, the cultural centre etc. have been established in the university to look after the student support and guidance activities.

#### ***i. Student Orientation Programme***

An orientation programme is offered to new students to introduce a range of university, faculty and departmental based services with the objectives of adapting and familiarizing new students to the university culture and university system, eliminating ragging in the university, developing positive attitudes, developing basic managerial skills of students, inculcating strong disciplines in the students' mind, encouraging students to work as team players, minimizing students' conflicts, and direct students towards relevant and suitable career path.

The Faculty Student Handbooks are made available to the undergraduates at the commencement of the orientation programme which includes essential basic information such as details of courses, by-laws, procedures, schedules for examination etc. to the students. The library staff and other service units such as physical education unit also conduct their induction programmes during this period.

#### ***ii. Academic guidance and student counselling***

Academic guidance is well planned by appointing course coordinators by all the academic departments. It is observed that all the staff members and Heads of the departments act as academic counsellors. Most of them make a good rapport with the students.

The University has appointed a senior student counsellor to coordinate the student counselling activities under the guidance of Deputy Vice-Chancellor. In addition, the university has appointed a Deputy Senior Student Counsellor and student counsellors for each faculty. The student counselling service of the university provides services and programmes which promote the personal development and psychological well-being of students. The student counsellors play a key role in safeguarding new students from ragging and conducting orientation programmes. It is commendable that the Faculty of Medicine has a Student Support Service which is open during working hours. This centre handles problems of medical students with regards to academic and personal matters on a one-to-one confidential basis. They also have access to a hot line 24 hours of the day, every day of the year.

Group email address was created for all student counsellors in Wellamadama premises in order to communicate efficiently. Meetings of student counsellors are held frequently to discuss student matters. It should be highlighted that student leaders and non academic staff who residing the vicinity have also extended their support in order to maintain a peaceful environment in the university premises.

University of Ruhuna has appointed a Proctor to be in charge of the disciplinary activities of the students with the support of deputy proctor for each faculty. This helps smooth functioning of the university without disruption.

### ***iii. Mentoring***

According to SER, a mentor is appointed for each student during the orientation programme. The idea is to act as facilitators and provide a voluntary service until the students graduate to develop student's career. This mentoring service is in practice in the Faculty of Science and Medicine with students support service and not implemented fully in other faculties. As this is a good initiative measures should be taken to implement it effectively.

The UGC has formally approved the establishment of CGCs in the Universities from 2002 to develop skills of graduates and undergraduates to promote themselves in the highly competitive job market. This unit in the University of Ruhuna is coordinated by a Director who is a senior lecturer and regularly conducts workshops and training programs mostly for the students of the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences and Management to meet its objectives. According to the SER, two most important bodies of CGU are the Career Advisory Board and the Career Explorer Committee. The Career Advisory Board was formed with the representatives from all the faculties and conducts meetings where experienced academics discuss about selecting resource persons and workshops that they should conduct on behalf for the students. The Career Explorers Committee is said to be formed by students to facilitate the interaction between the unit and the students; however this committee is not formed.

IRQUE project has sponsored the establishment of a Career Information Recourse Centre (IRC) which is developed to allow students to access the information regarding new career paths. There were several vital programmes that draw large number of students towards the CGU. The programs conducted in association with Sri Lankan Airline, Aitken Spence, Samapth Bank and with some of the government departments as such as census & statistics department need special mention. This unit is functioning well.

### ***iv. Student welfare***

The University of Ruhuna Student Affairs Branch provides many services such as student registration, payment of Mahapola scholarship, Bursaries and other scholarships, providing hostels and canteens facilities to students. The university decentralized the responsibilities by establishing separate administrative sections in each faculty.

Social interactions among students are encouraged through facilities provided at the Student Centre. Canteen, Newspapers and photocopying services are some of the other facilities available in the Student Centre. There are five canteens within the Wellamadama university premises and one canteen for each faculty located outside the main complex.

The Faculty of Medicine provides hostel facilities to all the students with the newly opened two hostels in 2009. The Faculties of Engineering and Agriculture use rented houses in addition to university hostels to provide accommodation. For faculties in the Wellamadama complex, there are five female hostels, two male hostels and one hostel for the student *bikkus*. Due to the large number of female students registering at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences there is a shortage in providing hostel facilities to female students at the Wellamadama complex. First year students and final year students are given priority. It is noteworthy to mention that all disabled students are provided hostel facilities. The measures introduced by the wardens of hostels to provide the best possible service from the resources made available is commendable.

It is noteworthy to mention that all final year students are provided Rs; 3000/= for internship programme. This is mostly used by the Faculties of Management and Finance and Humanities and Social Sciences.

#### ***v. Medical centre***

The main medical centre is situated at Wellamadama and two separate medical centers are operated at the faculties of Agriculture and Engineering. There are two medical officers and other staff attached to the main medical Centre. The centre provides medical facilities for the university students, staff and families of the staff. It opens on weekdays 8 am to 4 pm. Among its many services counselling, basic medical laboratory tests and dental clinic should be mentioned. The Medical centre has an ambulance; however the condition is not satisfactory. One of the main constraints that they face is the unavailability of Nurses. The lower salary and poor benefits compared to the Government service is the main reason for the difficult of recruiting the nurses. UGC has to take remedial measures to address this problem. All the Western medical certificates supplied by students are certified by the chief medical officer; however no facilities for certifying Ayurvedic medical certificates.

#### ***vi. Physical education facilities***

University of Ruhuna has a Director of Physical Education and five instructors. The Department is governed by a Sports Advisory Board, which consists of officials of the department and two academic representatives from each of the Faculties. The Sports Council consisting of all captains and vice captains help in organizing sports activities.

The university has a well equipped modern indoor stadium. It provides facilities to play volleyball, netball, badminton, table tennis, wrestling and taekwondo. The university has a large play ground which has a 400m track and facilities to play football, hockey, cricket, elle, baseball and rucker. Other remote faculties also provide sports facilities to their students. The University of Ruhuna provides running shoes, road race shoes, football, hockey and badminton boots and subsistence of Rs 250 per day to the players. Furthermore the university provides Rs 25 per day as a nutritional allowance for students who are attending the training camps.

The University conducts annual leadership training workshops for the sport captains, vice captains and faculty captains, fresher's sport meet and interfaculty sports meet. Over 2000 students from all 7 faculties participate in the interfaculty sport meet.

In addition to sports, the gymnasium has the facilities to improve the physical fitness of the students and the staff. It includes 17 physical fitness machines donated by KOICA, Korea. The Review Team was also impressed by the very professional manner in which the Director of Sports went about his duties. However, It was noted that only about 1/3 of students use these sports facilities.

#### ***vii. Centre for International Affairs (CINTA)***

Centre for International Affairs (CINTA) was established in 2005 with a view to support the international link programmes and foreign students. CINTA has already established links with Adger University and UMB Life Sciences of Norway, University of Durham of UK. In addition, CINTA provides support services to foreign students who are following the M.Sc in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies (CPDS) under a tripartite study programme among University of Ruhuna, Tribuwan University of Nepal and Eastern University of Sri Lanka. The centre is providing very important service.

#### ***viii. Other centres and units providing students support services***

The review team noted that there are many cultural activities and social events organized by various student groups, centres and units established at the university, such as a) Cultural Centre which promotes and facilitates creative and artistic talents of the university community, b) Centre for Modern Languages and Civilizations which conducts French, German, Hindi, Korean, Japanese and Tamil language courses, c) Centre for Conflict Studies with the objective of enhancing social harmony among university students and the community, and d) Engineering Education Centre which coordinates with the National Apprenticeship and Training Authority (NAITA) to organize industrial training placements for engineering undergraduates.

The Faculty of Science has successfully been able to hold a Faculty Day which provides opportunity for all students, academic staff, academic supportive staff, non-academic staff and temporary staff to participate in sport activities and some cultural events to enhance the relationship among all sections of the faculty in a stress-free environment. As this leads to social harmony the university should encourage all the other faculties to have a Faculty Day in their calendar.

The student union and a variety of other student societies arrange various functions each year with the involvement of students, staff and the community outside the faculty. Student's societies and clubs in the Faculty of Medicine such as medical Faculty Students Union, Air Rifle Shooting Club, Western Dancing Club, Sports Club, Carrom Club, Explorers Club, Arts Circle, Buddhist Society, Islamic Society and Music Club enhance physical fitness, stress free mentality and social harmony among university students and teachers. Other Faculties also have such societies and units for students support service such as Cultural centre and museum in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

#### **4.7 External Degree Programmes**

##### **Validation and Approval of External Degrees**

The Council of the University of Ruhuna in 1996 approved the proposal made by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, with the recommendation of the Senate, to offer the External Degrees. The External Examination Unit commenced its operations related to External Degrees under the guidance, recommendations and approval of the Senate and the Council in 1998. Presently the Unit offers only B.A (General) Degrees.

University authorities responsible for external examinations are; The Council, the Senate and the External Degree Coordinating Committee comprising of Vice Chancellor – Ex- officio Chairman, Director - External Examination Unit, Deans, Heads of the Departments (of the faculties offering External Degrees), Registrar, Bursar, Senior Assistant Registrar - External Examination Unit - Secretary

In 2009, External Degree Coordinating Committee was replaced with an External Degree Board of Management with an objective of strengthening the monitoring and reviewing of the external degree programme. The composition of the External Degree Board of Management is as follows: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Ex- officio Chairman), Dean/s of the faculty/faculties offering external degree/s, Another Dean nominated by the university Council, Director, Graduate Studies, Director, External Examination Unit, Two UGC appointed council members nominated by the university Council, Senior Assistant Registrar - External Examination Unit - Secretary

Validation and approval procedures of external degree programmes are similar to internal programmes. However, external degree programme still continue with an examination system of end of each academic year.

### **Assistance and support for external institutions**

There are no registered or accredited external institutions with respect to the external degree programme of University of Ruhuna.

### **Comparability of awards**

Registration of the external students is valid for 3 years. A candidate who could not complete the Degree within the initial 3 years needs to renew his/her registration by paying a renewal fee. The maximum period is 10 years, after which, the registration is cancelled.

A minimum period of 3 years is required to complete B.A. (General) Degree. After one year from registration, a candidate can sit for the First Examination in arts and can continue to B.A. Degree Part-I and Degree Part-II respectively in the next two years. The First Examination in Arts is held in the month of January and the other two exams in the month of December every year.

The University of Ruhuna commenced enrolment of students for External degrees in 1997. The annual intake was around 2000 during the initial few years and now it has exceeded 3000. The first batch of the external degree students of University of Ruhuna graduated in 2001. Since then, 2,725 have graduated through four general external degree convocations.

### **Comparability of the students experience on external degree programmes**

The main responsibility of the External Examination Unit is to conduct examinations for externally registered undergraduates. It has no control over students' teaching / tuition or supervision. It was reported that the examinations are held in such manner to maintain the more or less same standards of the degree as in internal degree programmes. However, it is noted that the external examinations are held at the end of year whilst the internal students has continuous evaluations and semester based examinations. In addition, these students are not provided with other important skills, such as English, IT etc. Therefore, the external examinations programmes offered by Universities of Sri Lanka has to be reviewed at the national level and appropriate policies should be taken to avoid this discrepancy between the internal and external graduates of a same university.

Feedback seminars led by university internal lecturers' panel for a short period is one of the steps taken to improve the quality of external graduates. In addition, following facilities are provided to support external undergraduates: Provision of comprehensive student handbook, Provision of course manuals, conducting feedback seminars by senior academic staff of the university, Conducting examinations regularly and Releasing examination results within 6-8 months from the date of the examination.

## **4.8 University/Industry/Community/Other Extension Activities**

The University-Industry links etc. as described in the self-evaluation report give a picture of the wide range of interests that spans all the Faculties. The activities undertaken and services offered by the Faculties have impacts that are not limited to the Southern Region; and the academics are aware regarding the benefits of these links. The consultancy services and professional relationships with national organizations are very impressive and are indicative of a high reputation and a national profile. The Faculties of Agriculture and of Management and Finance have outstanding performances in this regard.

The Faculties of Agriculture and of Engineering place students in the industry for significant periods as a component of coursework. The industrial placement of engineering undergraduates is a partial fulfillment for the charter, i.e. membership of professional bodies. This is of definite advantage to the students because in order to be fully professionally

qualified a university graduate has to become a Member of the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka and this requires the fulfillment of an industrial training requirement covering a specified period. After getting employed the graduate will be qualified to apply for the charter three months earlier; and the benefit of this will accrue over the lifetime.

In the faculties of Agriculture, Engineering, Management & Finance and Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, the links with industry are regular. At the Faculty of Engineering there are regular industrial advisory board meetings with representatives of industry. These are conducted to ascertain where and what modifications need to be made to the curriculum to suit industrial needs.

Another feature is the offering of consultancy services by the individual departments and academics to industry and other organisations not only within the southern province but across the country as a whole. University of Ruhuna established a very strong link with Hambantota Chamber of Commerce which is beneficial to both parties. Beyond this there are regular short courses offered by the individual departments according to their expertise to professionals within industry and government as well.

The Faculty of Agriculture has established an Industrial Placement Office (IPO) in 2004. The office is run by an Industrial Placement Officer, under the direct supervision of Dean, Faculty of Agriculture. The objectives of IPO are to build the image of the university, establish relationships with prospective alumni, improve the quality of the graduates through career guidance service, establish relationships with other prospective organizations and generate income to be self sustainable. IPO has already established links with, University in Japan, University of Karlsruhe, and Stdwerke Karlsruhe project Germany, Open University of Sri Lanka, IDB, CIC, Harishchandra Mills, Hayleys, Ruhuna Business Incubator, HyosunOmb pvt Ltd, Net water Forum, Lanka Jalani, BURNS, UNDP, HARTI, Government Research Institutes, Mahaweli Authority and several NGOs. Consultancy services have been provided to the U-10 Cinnamon Processing Association, Practical Action, Lalan Brothers, first industrial bio gas plant in Ambewela (German funded), Red Cross and Agromart Foundation. Knowledge dissemination programs were conducted through 'VIDATHA' centres for the farmers and school children. Coordination of the government exhibitions such as Invention commission, Deyata kirula, Mahapola, Hambantota Navodaya, VIDATHA, etc. were also done.

The Faculty of Management & Finance maintains strong collaboration with the industry through the internship training of final year students. Further, the faculty has been able to maintain strong relationship with the Securities & Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka, CIMA, CIM, SLIM, Small Enterprise Development Division of the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Chamber of Commerce, Bank of Ceylon, Peoples Bank etc. In addition, the faculty works collaboratively with private sector organizations and NGOs in consulting works, project proposal writing and implementing projects. To share the business information, the Faculty of Management & Finance has established several centres with the support of the industrial community and some of them are as follows: Capital Market Information Centre (CMIC) was established with the collaboration of Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Colombo Share Market, to provide capital market information for those who are willing to acquire them. Induwara Asapuwa Circle was established by the students of the Faculty of Management & Finance aimed to share computer knowledge with the help of outside computer service provider called E-shop. Through this, the selected students are given free education of the Autocad Program under the patronage of the Induwara Asapuwa Circle.

The University of Ruhuna conducts many community development programmes aimed at helping the university community as well as the people in the Southern Region.

The Department of Sinhala, has taken many steps to popularise the study of Sinhala and conducts various courses aimed at developing the knowledge of language, linguistic and literary analysis. Some of the activities carried out during past five years are the concert of “Nadagam and Nuthya Gee” held in 2008, annual “Kala Ulela” (Arts Festival) which is organized by the student union, “Vibhuthi”, the Journal of the Sinhala Department, published every year, “Manawasinghe Prathyawanalokana” (Sri Chandrathna Manawasinghe felicitation programme) and “Amarasekara Prathyawanalokana” (Gunadasa Amarasekara felicitation ceremony). With a view to attaining community development goals, every year the academic staff conducts a series of seminars in Sinhala for school children sitting the GCE (A/L) Examination. At the same time they hold special seminars and workshops to guide the school teachers in achieving professionalism in teaching Sinhala at their schools. Moreover, the academic staff members participate frequently in national drama and literary festivals as adjudicators.

The Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies conducts counselling programmes in accordance with the models introduced in the Dhamma with collaboration of qualified musico-therapists and psychiatrists. The erudite clergy and lay academics of the department very often travel to other countries on religio-academic missions. The Exhibition of Buddhist Sculpture held by a scholar monk in the department travelled to several towns in Sri Lanka and Malaysia, enlightening thousands of people on the fundamentals of Buddhist art.

From year 2005, the Department of History and Archaeology has conducted a lecture series for the new recruits to the Sri Lanka Navy at the Southern Naval Base. This department participates in a radio programme called “Avarjana” which is broadcast by the SLBC Ruhunu Service.

In year 2008, the Department of Sociology organized an Ayurvedic Conference and felicitated 10 well-known Ayurvedic Physicians in the Southern Province. The university commenced an Ayurvedic Medical Centre with a Doctor and three staff members with the patronage of the Department of Ayurveda. In 2008, under the IRQUE project, the department implemented a professional counselling centre for the students and currently students from all faculties enjoy its services.

The Department of Geography has a number of programmes significant in the context of community development and environment conservation. The department maintains a Meteorological Centre that collects meteorological data.

The Department of Economics and Political Science conducts an island-wide teacher training programme covering all provinces except North and East. It also conducts Quiz competitions for the GCE (A/L) students in the Southern Province and it broadcast on Ruhunu Service (SLBC). At the community level, the department conducts a very useful programme for the entrepreneurs in the Southern Province where the interested entrepreneurs can find research-based solutions to their business problems in collaboration with the university staff. In terms of creating opportunities for the students, they have made industrial level links with institutions such as the Southern Province Chamber of Commerce and the final year students do research with the industries concerned.

The ELTU conducts a weekend Certificate and Diploma programme in ‘English for Employment’ for a clientele of about 1000 students. It also caters to requests made by different organizations and as a result, several courses were conducted: ‘Diploma English for Teacher of English’ for the Ministry of Education 2005-2006; ‘English for Administrators’ for the executives in the Secretariat of the Southern Province; ‘English for Effective Communication’ for Institute of Engineers Sri Lanka 2009; and ‘English for Effective Communication’ for the Education Administrators in the Southern Province. Moreover, under the sponsorship of the English Division of the Southern Province Department of Education, the members of the staff at ELTU hold seminars for teachers in teaching language and literature.

The Clinical Departments of the Faculty of Medicine have the responsibility of managing about ten wards at the Teaching Hospitals at Karapitiya and Mahamodara. In addition, these departments are entrusted to conduct out-patient service clinics numbering about fifteen in the two hospitals, regularly. The Departments of Surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology are entrusted to carry out regular routine surgery sessions as well as to attend to emergency surgical operations. In addition, special patient service facilities are provided by the Faculty of Medicine and those include: Andrology services - Department of Anatomy, Filariasis clinics – Department of Parasitology, EEG, EMG and Lung Function Test – Department of Physiology, Microbiology laboratory services and consultancies – Department of Microbiology, Pathology laboratory services and consultancies – Department of Pathology, Primary Health Care services to Bope-Poddala MOH area – Department of Community Medicine, Hospital based Forensic Medical services including conduct of postmortem and forensic laboratory services and provision of expert forensic advice/evidence – Department of Forensic Medicine, Nuclear Medicine laboratory services to the Southern Province – Nuclear Medicine Unit, Specialist Neurological services including EEG, EMG, BSER facilities and the botulinum toxin clinic – Department of Medicine, Specialist advice on bone and mineral metabolism – Department of Medicine and Fibreoptic Bronchoscopy services – Department of Medicine.

The Department of Mathematics of the Faculty of Science has been supporting needy school students and underdeveloped schools by providing scholarships for students and books for libraries for those schools through ‘Umi-Matara foundation’ and ‘Educational Support Foundation Ruhuna Mathematics’ established by the volunteer involvement of staff members of the department.

## **5. OVERALL JUDGMENT OF LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN THE QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY**

The Review Team is of the opinion that University of Ruhuna can be given an overall judgment of “confidence” on its quality assurance arrangements in the areas of a) University goals and corporate planning, b) Financial resource and management, c) Research, d) Quality management and administration, e) Quality assurance, f) Learning resources and student support, g) External degree programmes and g)University/Industry/Community and other extension services, in spite of the short coming revealed in the report.

## 6. COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. University Goals and Corporate Planning

#### Commendations

The Review Team wishes to commend the University for;

- a) The enthusiasm and support provided by all parties of the University to the Review Team during the review process.
- b) Showing the commitment for quality assurance of its programmes by completing all Subjects Review (Except the newly established Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology) and appointing Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor as the Chairman and Secretary, respectively of the International Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) of the University.
- c) Innovative administrative and financial processes to decentralize university management to overcome difficulties of locating three faculties away from the main University complex which has also opened-up opportunities for distinctive and independent development of faculties.
- d) Good financial discipline by way of issuing internal administrative circulars by the Vice-Chancellor, and interventions made by the members of the Council to instill good practices in financial management in looking in to various aspects and helping the University Administration to improve procedures.
- e) Promoting communication between the authorities and students and adopting a more open door policy which has helped the university to reduce student's unrest considerably during last few years.
- f) Securing funding for research through various national and international resources and publishing 3 peer reviewed journals (National and international) and 04 proceedings annually.
- g) Providing opportunity to students to verify their marks by formally requesting it with a nominal payment.
- h) Promoting the use of IT to improve the services provided by the library and IT Centre/computer units.
- i) Proactive steps taken to enhance outreach activities through various university-Industry/Community linkages.

#### Recommendations

- a) Progress review of the Corporate Plan should be made periodically with the Council and the financial and other resource constraints should be communicated to the UGC.
- b) In complying with the older established universities, it is recommended to prepare a "university calendar" by compiling all important rules, regulation and by laws.
- c) The University should consider bringing all the classrooms and lecture theatres/rooms under one authority rather than assign these to particular Heads of Departments. This is an aspect of Assets Management that is often overlooked due to the interest of Faculties in "ownership" of spaces.
- d) Attract qualified staff and providing postgraduate training facilities to probationary lectures need to be addressed with the UGC taking appropriate policy measures at the national level.
- e) Administrative vacancies needs to be filled and the new appointees should be trained to assure effective functioning of the university.

- f) The quality assurance process within each faculty need to be improved. The subject benchmark statements as well as others pertaining to teaching learning, assessments, postgraduate degrees, student feedback etc. Issued by the QAA Council of the UGC provide guidelines for quality of study programmes and should be adopted and used for improvement of quality.
- g) IQAU while monitoring the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the QA review reports should also bring some of the issues that need to be brought to the notice of higher authorities outside the university such as, the CVCD, UGC and the Ministry of Higher Education for improvement.
- h) It is noted that there are many issues related to the curriculum revisions. Introduction of large number of courses without an overall review within the university has increased the workload for staff and made time tabling very difficult for the administration. At the same time, there are concerns about the outdated curriculum in certain faculties. Therefore, the Team recommends the university to have an overall review of the curriculum to address this important issue. An internal senate sub-committee, if complemented with external support, could undertake such tasks. During this process it is important to give attention to the resources available to implement the curriculum.
- i) A senate sub-committee is recommended to review new courses/academic programmes before it is placed at the Senate for discussion and approval
- j) While appreciating the large number of students and the constraints of resources, both human and physical, the team wishes to recommend to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to review its delivery of academic programmes. Innovative approaches to improve staff-students contact hours and interactions are needed to address this problem. The students from this faculty should be provided with more access to computers, English etc.
- k) The services provided by the ELTU are not adequate to meet the demand/need of the students. More resources with close monitoring from each faculty is required to assure that students are provided with adequate learning support from the ELTU.
- l) External examinations programmes offered by the university should be reviewed and appropriate action should be taken to make sure that there is no discrepancy between the internal and external programmes and the learning of graduates of a same university.
- m) Good practices found in some faculties in the University, such as mentoring, use of computer based learning and assessment systems, student's evaluation of staff, peer reviews etc should be adapted to the other faculties.

There is broad-based ownership of the Corporate Plan of the University. However, every Faculty encountered barriers to their full implementation due to shortage of financial resources. The shortage of academic staff with experience and higher qualifications was also given as a reason for shortfall. Another factor that militated against implementation of the Corporate Plan in all Faculties, except two, was the heavy workload on the academics. Although the University Council had ratified the Corporate Plan after its formulation, it had not been informed periodically of the extent to which the objectives were being attained.

## **2. Financial Resources and Management**

The University has an effective and robust Financial Management system in place. The interventions made by the members of the Council to instil good practices in financial management to improve procedures are commendable. These progressive steps may have contributed to a drop in the number of audit queries.

### **3. Research**

There is adequate physical resources, space, equipment and human resources available for conducting meaningful research in all faculties. The scale and nature of the research activities in all faculties have developed considerably since the university was created. Post graduate research degrees awarded by the university have shown a progressive increase during the past few years. However, there are some issues with regard to delay in releasing results, and undue extension of the duration of the courses. Lack of adequate funding was a major concern of staff and students who self-sponsor their projects.

### **4. Quality Management and Administration**

There are few constraints in ensuring the availability of adequate, qualified staff to conduct academic programmes at the University. Some faculties, such as Agriculture, Sciences and Medical have qualified staff whilst, the Faculty of Engineering finds it difficult to recruit academic staff. The Faculty of Humanities and social Sciences have very few vacant positions, though the majority of staff does not have required postgraduate qualifications. These limitations could have a serious impact on the quality of education and research.

The administrative and financial divisions of the University led by Registrar and Bursar respectively provide an effective service to guarantee smooth functioning of the University. The disadvantages of having three faculties away from the main university administrative complex have been circumvented to a greater extent by team work. The innovative administrative arrangements with delegation of responsibilities could be an example to other universities. There are few administrative staff vacancies which need to be filled early.

### **5. Quality Assurances**

The Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) has been established in June 2008, with the Vice Chancellor as the Chair of the Unit and the Deputy Vice Chancellor as its secretary ensuring the leadership and the commitment of the University of Ruhuna at the highest level. All the department of its established faculties and the library have completed the quality assurance subject reviews and have received the reports.

#### **Academic Standards of programmes and awards**

Curriculum review and revisions in general have not made much progress in many faculties, though all faculties have curriculum development committees. Faculties had introduced new degree programmes and new course units, rather than revise existing curricula. Our comment is that the existing programmes and their units require serious review and revision as much as the introduction of new programmes and units. An academic development and planning committee, a subcommittee of Senate which exists in some other universities, could review these new courses and avoid such problems. There are difficulties of drawing up timetables, as a result of the proliferation of course units in narrow specializations, especially in the last two semesters.

Many quality assurance systems including regulatory framework, processes, mechanism and good practices are in place. One of the most commendable practices of the University is to provide an opportunity to students to verify their marks by formally requesting it with a nominal payment. This practice would undoubtedly help to improve transparency and the confidence of the evaluation system, though, only a small fraction of students used this facility.

## **6. Learning Resources and Student Support**

Except, newly established faculties of Management and Fisheries and Marine Science & Technology, others have good infrastructure to conduct academic programmes. The faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty find it difficult to conduct tutorial and practical classes due to inadequate number of small lecture rooms. Bringing all the classrooms and lecture theatres/rooms under one authority rather than assign these to particular Heads of Departments could provide a solution to a certain extent, to the unavailability of class rooms to offer increased number of course units by some departments.

There is a well equipped central library at Wellamadama and sufficiently equipped separate libraries at other premises. The services offered by the University Computer Unit, Department of Computer Science and other Computer Units of faculties to students and staff are commendable. The university has taken initiative to establish an e-culture within the university community in order to reduce paper based communication. Inadequate computer facilities available in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences compared to the large number of students is a major constraint for conducting practical sessions on IT for those students. The English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) is established in each faculty. However, the adequacy of services provided to students to gain such knowledge is questionable due to inadequate qualified staff, lack of small lecture rooms for group work and unattractive teaching methods and instructors.

### **Student support and guidance**

It is commendable that appointment of Deputy vice chancellor has helped to coordinate all the Student support activities and provides very important guidance services. Medical centre, student counselling service, student welfare services, Department of Physical Education, hostels, Career Guidance Unit, canteens, the cultural centre etc. have been established in the university to provide a very satisfactory students support and guidance services.

## **7. External Degree Programmes**

The main responsibility of the External Examination Unit is to conduct examinations for externally registered undergraduates. It has no control over students' teaching / tuition or supervision. However, it is noted that the external examinations are held at the end of year whilst the internal students has continuous evaluations and semester based examinations. In addition, these students are not provided with other important skills, such as English, IT etc. Therefore, the external examinations programmes offered by Universities of Sri Lanka have to be reviewed to avoid this discrepancy between the internal and external graduates of a same university.

## **8. University/Industry/Community/Other Extension Activities**

The University-Industry links etc. as described in the self-evaluation report give a picture of the wide range of interests that spans all the Faculties. The activities undertaken and services offered by the Faculties have impacts that are not limited to the Southern Region; and the academics are aware regarding the benefits of these links. The consultancy services and professional relationships with national organizations are very impressive and are indicative of a high reputation and a national profile.

## 7. ANNEXES

### Annex 1: AGENDA FOR THE REVIEW VISIT

#### **Day 1 (14.06.2010)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
08.00 – 08.30	Review Team's private meeting with QAA Council representative
08.30 – 09.00	Finalizing the agenda by the Review Team with the Chairperson and Secretary/IQAU
09.00 – 09.30	Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor
09.30 – 10.30	Presentation by Vice-Chancellor (with DVC, Deans, Directors, Registrar, Bursar and Librarian)
10.30 – 11.00	Discussion (with Tea)
11.00 – 12.30	Meeting with Deans
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 14.30	Meeting with members of the Council
14.30 – 15.30	Meeting with Bursar, Deputy Bursar, SABs and ABs
15.30 – 16.15	Meeting with SAR (Exam.) & AR (Student welfare) (with Tea)
16.15 – 17.00	Meeting with all faculty SARs and ARs
17.00 – 17.30	Meeting with Assistant Internal Auditor (AIA)
17.30 – 18.00	Meeting of Review Team

#### **Day 2 (15.06.2010)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
08.30 – 09.30	Meeting with the members of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit
09.30 – 10.00	Meeting with Senior Professors of the Senate
10.00 – 10.30	Meeting with Registrar (with Tea)
10.30 – 11.00	Meeting with SAR (L&D), SAR(General Administration) and works engineer
11.00 – 11.30	Meeting with AR (Academic Establishment) & AR (Non-academic Establishment)
11.30 – 12.30	Meeting with Librarian & Senior Staff of the Library
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
	<b>Faculty of Science</b>
13.30 – 14.00	Meeting with Heads of Departments and Coordinators/Directors of units
14.00 – 14.30	Meeting with academic staff
	<b>Faculty of Fisheries &amp; Marine Sciences and Technology</b>
14.30 – 15.00	Meeting with Heads of Departments and Coordinators/Directors of units
15.00 – 15.30	Meeting with academic staff (with Tea)
15.30 – 17.00	Observing facilities at the Faculty of Science, Faculty of Fisheries & Marine Sciences and Technology and Computer Unit (Tea at Faculty of Science)
17.00 – 17.30	Observing the facilities at the main library
17.30 – 18.00	Meeting of Review Team
20.00 – 22.00	Welcome Dinner (hosted by the Vice-Chancellor)

**Day 3 (16.06.2010)**

Time	Activity
	<b>Faculty of Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</b>
08.30 – 09.00	Meeting with Heads of Departments and Coordinators/Directors of units
09.00 – 09.30	Meeting with academic staff
	<b>Faculty of Management &amp; Finance</b>
09.30 – 10.00	Meeting with Heads of Departments and Coordinators/Directors of units (with Tea)
10.00 – 10.30	Meeting with academic staff
10.30 – 11.00	Meeting with Head/ELTU
11.00 – 12.00	Meeting with undergraduate students
12.00 – 13.30	Observing the facilities at the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Faculty of Management & Finance, ELTU, CGU, CLMC and other units at the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
13.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 18.30	<b>Group 1 / Group 2</b> <b>Faculty of Medicine / Faculty Engineering</b>
15.00 – 15.30	Meeting with Heads of Departments and Coordinators/Directors of units (with Tea)
15.30 – 16.00	Tea
16.00	– Meeting with academic staff
17.30	Observing the facilities at the Faculty of Medicine / Faculty Engineering
18.30 – 19.00	Meeting of Review Team

**Day 4 (17.06.2010)**

Time	Activity
	<b>Faculty of Agriculture</b>
08.30 – 09.00	Meeting with Heads of Departments and Coordinators/Directors of units (with Tea)
09.30 – 10.00	Tea
10.00 – 11.30	Meeting with academic staff (with Tea) Observing the facilities at the Faculty of Agriculture
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch
13.00 -13.30	Meeting with Director (Physical Ed.) & Members of Sports Advisory Committee
13.30 – 14.00	Meeting with Senior Student Counsellor & Deputy Senior Student Counsellors
14.00 – 14.30	Meeting with Wardens, Chief Security Officer and Sub-wardens
14.30 – 15.00	Meeting with Director (Graduate Studies)
15.00 – 15.30	Meeting with Director and AR of Centre for International Affairs (CINTA)
15.30 – 16.00	Meeting with Director and coordinators of SDC and Director/CGU(with Tea)
16.00 – 16.30	Meeting with Chairman (External Exams Management Board) Director (External Exams) and AR
16.30 – 19.00	Observing the facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Centre – meeting the University Medical Officer (16.30 - 17.00)</li> <li>• Gymnasium (17.00 – 17.30)</li> <li>• Hostels and Canteens (17.30 – 19.00)</li> </ul>
19.00 – 19.30	Meeting of review team

**Day 5 (18.06.2010)**

Time	Activity
08.30 – 09.30	Meeting with postgraduate students
09.30 – 10.00	Meeting with non-academic staff
10.00 – 10.30	Meeting with proctor and deputy proctors (with Tea)
10.30 – 11.30	Meeting of the Review Team
11.30 – 12.30	Feed back meeting with Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Deans, Registrar, Librarian and Bursar
12.30 – 13.30	Farewell Lunch

**Annex 2: LIST OF EVIDENCE****A**

Academic Committee minutes  
 Academic Registry  
 Activities of Staff Development Centre  
 Annual Reports  
 Audit & Management Committee Report  
 Academic Committee minutes

**B**

Board of Management (External Examinations) minutes  
 Board of Guest House Management minutes  
 Building Progress Review Committee Reports  
 By-laws

**C**

Corporate Plan  
 Council Reports  
 Criteria for Selection of Student for Hostels  
 Curriculum & Evaluation Committee Reports  
 Career Advisory Committee minutes  
 Centre for International Affairs documents  
 Centre for Modern Languages & Civilization documents  
 Clients' Charter

**D**

Details and activities of the Career Guidance Unit  
 Details of Earned Income  
 Details of Mentoring Programmes  
 Details of Sports Facilities & Activities  
 Departmental documents
 

- Departmental meetings minutes
- Course outlines
- Study Module Evaluation Questionnaire
- Peer Evaluation Forms
- ICT use in teaching and learning (Example)

**E**

Earned Income disbursement formula  
Examination Offences Committee Reports

**F**

Faculty Board minutes  
Faculty Examination Board minutes  
Faculty Hand book  
Faculty Research/ Higher Degree Committee Reports  
Finance Committee Reports  
Financial Reports

**G**

Government Tender Procedures

**H**

Heads of Department Meeting Report  
Hostel Committee Reports

**I**

Industrial Training Programmes (UG Students)  
Internal Circulars  
Internal Quality Assurance Report

**L**

Library Committee Reports  
List of Bursary Recipients  
List of Other Scholarships & Bursaries with their criteria  
List of Student Councilors

**M**

Minutes of the Council  
MOUs & other detail of link programmes

**O**

Orientation Programme for new entrants (Sample)

**P**

PG Student selection procedures  
Procedure for procurement of Books & other library materials  
Procedure for Releasing Examination Results  
Publications of Academic Staff

**Q**

Quality Assurance Committee Report

## **S**

Schemes of Recruitment of Academic Staff

Schemes of Recruitment of Administrative & Non Academic Staff

Senate Minutes

Sports Advisory Committee Reports

Staff Population (Statistics for Staff/Students)

Student Registration Procedures

Subject Review Reports

## **U**

University Bursary Schemes

Members of the review panel

1. Prof. S. Mohandas/University of Jaffna
2. Emeritus Prof. Lakshman Jayathilaka / University of Peradeniya
3. Prof. E.R.N. Gunawardana/University of Peradeniya
4. Prof. G. Vidanapathirana/University of Kelaniya
5. Prof. H.M. Bandara /Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka
6. Prof. Rohini Seneviratne/University of Colombo