



# **PROGRAM REVIEW 2017**

Eastern University of Sri Lanka - Trincomalee Campus  
Faculty of Communication and Business Studies  
BA (Hons) Languages

**Programme Review Report: B.A. (Hons) in Languages.**  
**Trincomalee Campus,**  
**The Eastern University**  
**Site Visit Dates: 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.**

Reviewers:

Professor W. A. Liyanage (Chairperson)

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## **Section 1. A brief Introduction to the programme**

The B.A. in Language Studies at the Eastern University (Trincomalee Campus) is unique for several reasons. Firstly, it is a humanities programme housed in a faculty whose primary focus is Business and Communication Studies. Secondly, it is a programme where a general degree and an honours degree co-exist. At the third year, students have the option of leaving the programme with a general degree - a kind of fallback option not available at other universities. Though its name implies several languages, the programme is in fact in English Language and Literature. It admits students with minimal backgrounds in English, *i.e.*, students who would not be able to enter programmes in English at major universities in the country, and this is also an admirable aspect.

## **Section 2. Review team's observations on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)**

The SER had followed the required guidelines provided by the manual. A team of writers has worked on the report over several months, and everyone related to the programme has been involved. Four groups have contributed to the report, which has been written systematically. The report, however, is overly confident, and, therefore, contradictory about some aspects of the campus, department, and programme. For example, in the summary of Criterion 2, the writers claim, "The human resource in the department, in terms of academic needs, is sufficient." The claim is contradicted when the SWOT analysis of the report states that "the lack of senior academics" is a weakness at the campus. Moreover, the reviewers were to discover later that human resources in the department are not sufficient to reach the standards expected of a degree programme in languages. Without giving them required human resources, a review that looks into even minute aspects of the programme, is indeed unfair unless the authorities carefully address the gaps in the human resource profile during the post-review phase.

### **Section 3. Brief description of the review process**

The three reviewers individually marked the SER report before they met at the UGC to discuss each other's views on it. Then, the desk review report was submitted to the QAA director at the UGC. The desk review was meant to be a preliminary report, and all three reviewers agreed that the grade given by them to the report at the desk review would change after the site visit. The site visit took place from October 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>. It began with a meeting with the Rector, IQAC chairman and coordinator, the Dean of the faculty, the Head of the department, and some other academic members of the departments. The staff members, including the Rector, were extremely enthusiastic about the phenomenal growth of their university, and they were passionate about the university's future. It was heartening to see a group of young academics speaking so positively about their own university. In contrast to the enthusiasm of nearly all others, the Dean herself was peculiarly silent throughout the meeting, and compared to the vocal presence of younger academics, her silence was quite noticeable.

The reviewers were particularly happy about the ideas presented by younger lecturers, mostly probationary lecturers who are graduates of the same degree program under review. Those lecturers, mostly coming from rural backgrounds where there was very little access to quality English education, as they themselves claimed, communicated well in English. Since the programme on languages was being reviewed, the chairperson expressed his happiness about the progress made by the younger lecturers in mastering English. Referring to that fact, the head of the department, however, maintained that only about ten percent of students achieve such levels of English proficiency while the rest struggles to master English, and that those younger lecturers happen to be from that small group. The initial discussion with the academic staff was very promising, and their enthusiasm coloured the entire subsequent review activities. The reviewers were happy to notice that the academic staff included both males and females who were equally vocal expressing their views of the programme and the university.

The meeting with the academics was followed by an equally satisfying meeting with administrators that involved a senior assistant registrar, deputy registrar, two assistant registrars, and the assistant bursar. The reviewers noticed that administrative staff also included a significant number of females. All younger administrators were in their twenties. Though they were happy about the university and the working environment, their inexperience became apparent when they addressed the questions by the reviewers. They were happy that they were a part of a history that was being created. But they claimed that they wished there were more senior administrators. The reviewers also felt that those young administrators were taking up a large responsibility even before they could gain sufficient training under seniors. The reviewers were happy that some administrators were able to communicate in all three languages, which make them suitable to help the student community from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Even though the administrative language was English, they maintained, all three languages are used when dealing with the first year students. But the reviewers were to find out later that students did not believe that communication between them and the administration was as smooth as the administrators claimed.

Then came the meeting with 'stakeholders' – three persons, one female and two males, who are alumni of the university. Although the degree programme that was being reviewed was the B.A. in Languages, all alumni were from the B.A. in Communication Studies. Moreover, the two male alumni were from the external degree programme, which was not under review. Though they were not technically alumni of the programme, the reviewers had a cordial dialogue with them. They were equally enthusiastic about their university. Their presence, however, was not sufficient to ascertain that the programme or the faculty seeks the participation of alumni in key aspects of education at the campus.

After the alumni, technical and supporting staff met with the reviewers. The technical staff, who also included the physical studies instructor, who was practically the coach for many sports, were visibly young, admittedly inexperienced, and undertrained. Their exuberant enthusiasm and commitment were so much that they did not even complain about their own lack of training. The SER, however, has clearly stated that the technical support staff is not sufficient to carry out high quality teaching.

Even though not included in the original agenda, the reviewers were able to meet with the senior student counselor whose enthusiasm also matched the enthusiasm of all others. The young senior student counselor, who has just been promoted to the position of senior lecturer, maintained that he has not received any complaints that required counseling. And he mentioned further that student counselors have not received any training. He also lamented the fact that many senior academics are not interested in taking up responsibilities as student counselors. Their lack of involvement with students outside the classroom, argued the senior student counselor, has been a major hindrance to developing safe, congenial, and inclusive environment within the university. He admitted that ragging exists at the university albeit in 'milder' forms but that cannot be fully stopped unless the lecturers develop closer relationships with students.

After the meetings with the above groups, the reviewers were taken to different facilities such as lecture halls, mini theaters, sound studios, computer labs, gymnasium, and hostels. The most impressive of them was the mini theater and sound studio. The hostels, both male and female, looked impressive compared to the hostels at older universities. The gymnasium looked somewhat underused. The newly appointed physical education instructor described how he was trying to get things in order by motivating students to participate in more sports activities. The language lab had more than twenty computers but only about five were usable, and when asked, the assistant said that the machines were infected with viruses. The impressive film editing facilities had high quality computers. The several cupboards with DVDs made by students attested to the fact that those lab facilities have been used productively.

The meeting with students had been scheduled for the second day (October 3<sup>rd</sup>) at 8 a.m. Early in the morning on the second day, however, the coordinator informed the

chairperson by phone that the meeting had been delayed by thirty minutes. The reviewers were able to meet a group of students from B.A. programme in Languages at 8.40.a.m. The group included students representing all batches, ethnicities and gender. Though hesitant at the beginning, they started to speak up when encouraged to share their views. It was one of the most revealing meetings. While they had considerable respect and admiration for the academics, the students were critical of some aspects of administration. Strict bureaucracy and a lack of sympathy on the part of the administrators and non-academics, the students maintained, have created many difficulties for them. For example, some of the students have not been paid Mahapola for more than a year. Even though some have signed the required documents months ago, Mahapola money has not been sent to their accounts. Several administrators too agreed that there had been a delay in paying Mahapola. There is a certain communication gap between non-academics and the students, especially Sinhala students, who pointed out that their English is insufficient to communicate with non-academics who are also weak in English. The reviewers observed that the most of the non-academic staff at the dean's office were speakers of Tamil, and the use of Sinhala in daily affairs were visibly minimal while the majority of students were Sinhala speakers.

There are, the students claimed, unjustified restrictions on their mobility. Some non-academic officers accepted that there is a certain communication gap, but they deny the allegation that the administrators are too strict about students' conduct within the campus. As an amusing piece of evidence on the nature of relationship between the administrators and the students one may cite the fact that during 'ragging season,' the seniors had given the juniors a writing assignment on how the administrators treated students at the campus. The piece of evidence shows two things: 'ragging' does exist and the students are unhappy about the administration.

The reviewers, however, observed that there was a great deal of interaction among different ethnic groups within the student populations, and that aspect was visible in all facets of student life such as classrooms, hostels, and co-curricular activities. The reviewers felt that it was one of the important positive elements in the student life at the Trincomalee Campus of EUSL. In addition, the students highly appreciated the academic staff. The reviewers were also able to notice admirable dedication on the part of mostly young academic staff.

After the meeting with the students, all three reviewers started examining the documentary evidence in the room assigned to that task. Three reviewers divided the eight criteria among themselves, three each for Dr. Perera and Prof. Rameez, and two for Prof. Liyanage. What was immediately clear to the reviewers was that evidence files had not been properly arranged, and it was very difficult to retrieve required documents. The person who was in charge of preparing the documents had been transferred, on her request, to a different university. So, the lack of efficiency in filing was pointed to rest on the human resource gap left by that transfer. The reviewers, therefore, gave the younger

academic staff members who were there, about one hour to recode or rearrange the entire set of files. Even after that it was extremely difficult to locate the evidence mentioned in the SER. One of the major reasons for the difficulty of locating evidence was that the codes given in the SER were almost completely different from the ones on the files. The reviewers worked hard for hours in matching claims with evidence. After two sessions of scrutinizing documentary evidence, in the evening, the reviewers met at the hotel to discuss what they have discovered individually.



#### **Section 4. Overview of the faculty's approach towards quality and standards.**

The campus, department, and programme are genuinely interested in maintaining quality. At the meetings the academic staff stressed the resources needed to maintain quality, and they are aware of the fact they have to compete with better resourced, well - established, and reputed degree programmes at other national universities. An anxiety about the quality of their programme can be taken as a sign of aspirations for better quality. The faculty, however, has few facilities geared towards enhancing quality and standards. The quality assurance coordinator at the Eastern University, under whose guidance, quality-related activities take place, did not make an attempt to meet the reviewers at Trincomalee Campus. The chairperson of Internal Quality Assurance Cell at the campus has just begun her work from scratch, and the little room allocated to her at the dean's office looks literally a 'cell' - an indication of the campus's very recent attention to quality assurance systems. That the curriculum is being revised signifies some attention to quality related matters. In addition, all academic staff members have undergone an induction programme, though it is more of a UGC requirement than the campus's own mechanism of assuring quality. The reviewers were happy that quality and standards were not altogether ignored.

## **Section 5. Judgment on the eight criteria of Programme Review**

### **5.1. Programme Management:**

The academic programme is managed with some compliance with accepted norms and laws that ascertain effective, timely, transparent, lawful management of higher education institutions. The Faculty and Campus have attempted to set up a system of management that takes the views of all stakeholders into account. The reviewers, however, did not see different committee minutes related to diverse activities of programme management throughout the last few years. The Faculty Board minutes were the only form of records that had been kept to display the inclusive nature of administration. The recording of minutes by some committees was extremely poor, perhaps owing largely to the inexperience of the staff. Though there was a faculty calendar, adherence to it, was far from perfect. At the time of the site visit, the academic programme was considerably behind schedule for various reasons. Though there was some evidence to show stakeholder consultation in programme management, reviewers did not find sufficient evidence to be convinced that the views of the stakeholders were taken into consideration in the actions that followed. The student participation in these aspects of the programme is unsatisfactory. Student representatives, *i.e.*, the members of student unions, do not attend the Faculty Board meetings, and there was no evidence of students submitting any documents, requests and suggestions to the Faculty Board. At the time of the site visit, the students unions were almost totally inactive and there was widespread fear among students to take part in any union-related activities within the campus. There was an admirable document on a code of conduct but there was no evidence to show that it has been widely circulated. The Internal Quality Assurance Cell has been recently set up in a small room, which is also used as a 'mini kitchen,' and looked barely adequate for quality related activities. The chairperson of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell, though enthusiastic, looked very inexperienced.

### **5.2. Human and Physical Resources**

One of the striking aspects of the campus is the recent growth in infrastructure: There are several new buildings. Many other buildings are being built. The campus administration must be commended for that achievement. Those physical resources, however, could be used more effectively. The review team observed that the largest new building is used as an administrative center even though its sign board indicated that it was an ICT facility for students. The students themselves complained that the new building is being used for administrative work rather than for teaching activities. Many of the classrooms currently used for teaching looked unfit: they were not ideal for learning related activities. The language lab had twenty seven computers but only one of them was in working condition. The mini theater looked impressive but it needs experienced technical staff.

The new library building is indeed an important new addition. The library, however, needs more books and access to scholarly journals. Records on using the library by the students of the B.A. in Language Studies programme did not look good. The system of cataloguing was not user friendly. There must be a better-ventilated, preferably air-conditioned, and comfortable reading room for everyone.

Even though the SER report claims that is “sufficient in terms of academic needs” the review team felt that relatively inexperienced and young staff is struggling to run the programme. Except for two seniors with impressive postgraduate training, the others are far from impressive in their postgraduate education. Many seemed to focus on obtaining a Master’s degree just for the purpose of getting confirmation. Since the campus is located too far away from the main cities in the country, the academics are removed from many intellectual and academic debates that take place in and around major universities.

Teaching English as a second language is hardly effective. Even though the programme is run in English medium, the reviewers found out that many students could not express themselves in adequately English. Once they began talking in the vernacular, they spoke so much better. The extremely instrumentalist approach about English at the campus does not seem to allow students to learn the art of articulating subtle nuances in that language. A fully developed and better staffed ELTU programme is needed immediately. Frustration about insufficient English could be seen both among students and staff.

### **5.3. Programme Design and Development**

In designing the programme, the campus has been practicing a participatory approach, but the minutes of curriculum committees are rather cryptic and, sometimes, not well-recorded. The adherence to the SLQF is commendable.

The curriculum covers the basics of each subject. But it is weak in incorporating issues of gender, ethics, critical thinking, social justice, and so on. A somewhat narrow focus on subject matter and the instrumentalist approach towards all subjects seem to have made the curriculum a bit too narrow to foster the ideals of true education in the humanities. The discussions with the academic staff convinced the reviewers that the former are capable of developing the curriculum further. The campus administration must give some serious thoughts to regularly inviting guest lecturers who can add depth to the programme. Some *ad hoc* invitees for guest lectures were not the best in the respective fields.

Perhaps, owing to the fact that the programme is so young, it has not produced anyone attending international universities for postgraduate training. Regular peer reviews have not been conducted. No annual tracer studies showing the whereabouts of the programme’s alumni have been done.

#### **5.4. Course/Module Design and Development**

In designing the courses/modules, the programme has sought the expertise of academics at other universities. Different drafts of syllabi developed at various stages were found among the documentary evidence. To a degree, the courses followed SLQF guidelines. Yet, there was no conclusive evidence to show that those guidelines were discussed and debated at meetings. A clearly written graduate profile was not among the course documents, and therefore, it was difficult to discern what kind of attributes the programme envisions in its graduates. In interpersonal discussions with the reviewers, the senior academics and administrators admitted that they need a clearly written graduate profile. The reviewers could not locate any document seeking or obtaining student's feedback or the views of any other stakeholders in designing the curriculum. Academic staff has not undergone any serious training in course/module development. Internal monitoring of the programme is rather minimal. The newly appointed chairperson of the IQAC had plans for the future rather than records of achievements. As the chairperson herself admitted, she has been appointed during the SER writing process. Therefore, the cell has more promise than achievements.

#### **5.5. Teaching and Learning**

Teaching and learning at the campus are guided by mission statements published in the Corporate Plan and Faculty Handbook, though a clear action plan was not available at the site visit. Copies of syllabi seemed to have been distributed among students. The students claimed that it was not a consistent practice. Since there was very little evidence of research by lecturers, the evidence of incorporating their research into teaching is next to nothing. The only book by a member of academic staff, an admirable effort, was not 'research' per se. But the campus has recently organized some conferences and workshops that will hopefully develop a research culture. Moreover, there was very little evidence of students' creative activities and publications. There was some evidence of using innovative teaching methods and technology but the student feedback on those methods was minimal, and even more minimal was incorporating the students' views into teaching and learning activities. There was no evidence at all about any reward systems that identified excellent performers.

#### **5.6. Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression**

The young and committed academic staff makes an admirable effort to do their best for the students. But the learning environment is far from ideal; the students' dissatisfaction was clearly visible, and the students were quite vocal about that aspect. Though very energetic and kind, the administrative staff is either inexperienced or not trained properly to run a welcoming office environment. Students claimed that they needed to spend so much time in order to get things done. The very arrangement of some offices was

apparently unwelcoming. The dean's office, for example, was four doors away from the front door of a building, and the dean sat almost hidden at the end of a labyrinthine hallway. The building itself does not have any space for students to wait their turn to meet relevant persons, and students were seen standing outside the building. The lack of language skills in the staff was understood to be a major problem. The career guidance and student counseling were insufficient, and the staff involved in those activities seemed to have too much of a workload to carefully attend to students. Physical resources for career guidance and student counseling must receive better attention from the administrators. Too much focus on material development seems to have diverted attention away from extreme significance of having a favorable learning environment. The library, though located in an attractive new building, does not use ICT facilities to help staff and students in learning. Much of the record keeping at the library is done manually, and the records themselves were handwritten. There was little evidence to show any collaboration between academic staff and the library. There was a library committee, which is admirable, but the librarian (or her representative) is not invited to the faculty board. Though there are some occasional social activities where the staff and students are able to interact, participation in them by the staff is very minimal, perhaps largely owing to the fact that there are no residential facilities for the staff. At the moment, the gap between the staff and students is quite wide, and it is widening further—an alarming sign that made the reviewers worried. The way it has been originally designed, the programme has a very good fallback option for students: those who want to leave the programme with a general degree can easily use that option. The campus does not have clear plans to involve its alumni in making the learning environment better. The review team could not meet any alumni of the programme (B.A. in Languages) except for the younger academics.

### **5.7. Student Assessment and Awards**

One of the admirable aspects of the programme is the diverse innovative methods of assessment used at the department, which has two degree programmes: Communication Studies and Language Studies. It was not clear as to which programme uses which specific methods of assessment. Much of documentary evidence on assessment and awards was related to Communication Studies. The reviewers felt that none of standards in the criterion deserved full marks. Programme ILOs, course specifications, records on curriculum revisions and so on were available but those records had clear lapses indicating that those aspects of the programme are not regularly monitored. The reviewers were extremely happy to see some video productions as assignments but the methods of their assessment were not clear. Moreover, the way they were connected to the 'Languages' programme was also not so clear. Internship was an admirable practice, but there were only three pieces of documentary evidence about it. The feedback by students on all standards in this criterion was not available.

Examination by-laws were included in the Faculty Handbook, which is a commendable practice. There has not been regular peer reviews on assessment strategies. The evidence of students receiving complete transcripts at graduation was not found among the document files. The marking schemes were not available for courses or modules. Continuous assessment means providing students with feedback throughout their education process. But it was not clear how and when feedback is given to students on their assignments. No records were available on second marking.

## **5.8. Innovative and Healthy Practices**

At the Trincomalee campus, there is so much room for innovation since it does not have too much pressure from 'tradition.' But physical and human resources do not allow innovations to take place. Open Educational Resources were not easily available in classrooms observed by the reviewers. The new cafeteria building with a welcoming architectural design had free WiFi facilities on the third day of the visit though students pointed out that WiFi did not work most of the days. Two reviewers were able to go online with no problem there at the cafeteria.

The attention on research and development is rather rudimentary, but new initiatives to have an annual conference might be a good step towards research. The programme on languages, with its primary focus on English, has very little research opportunities at Trincomalee. If the 'languages' had included Sinhala and Tamil, and by extension the cultures of the speakers of those languages, there would have been numerous opportunities to conduct research on the culture/s of the Eastern province. The special degree students are required to carry out an independent research project as a partial requirement of their degree. Yet, there were no final year dissertations among the documentary evidence. The SER itself does not mention any file number or code for dissertations.

The administrative staff maintained that the campus provides funds and other resources for co-curricular activities. There were, however, very few activities of collective creativity. For example, the SER does not mention any social and cultural activities, in which staff and students participate collectively. The students repeatedly voiced their unhappiness at abysmal participation of the staff in the very few, occasional cultural activities at the campus.

The SER claims that the campus/programme generates its own income by an external programme in Languages. But the reviewers did not see any records of such income. In addition, the dean and the faculty do not seem to have their own funds for any co-curricular activities.

One of the most admirable aspects of the programme is that it has several fallback options: a diploma and a higher national diploma. There was not enough evidence showing how many students have used those options so far.

Sports activities at the campus were at a commendable level compared to other co-curricular activities. An energetic instructor of sports activities has recently begun to motivate students to take part in campus/university games. The insufficiently equipped gymnasium did not look to have been used regularly. Extreme heat makes it difficult to use the facility during the day time.

## Section 6. Grading Overall Performance of the Programme:

Overall Programme of Study Score

Criterion No.	Assessment Criteria	Criteria-wise score
1	Programme Management	85.2
2	Human and Physical Resources	50.0
3	Programme Design and Development	77.1
4	Course/ Module Design and Development	78.9
5	Teaching and Learning	76.3
6	Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression	54.2
7	Student Assessment and Awards	85.3
8	Innovative and Healthy Practices	28.6
	<b>Total on a thousand scale</b>	535.6
	<b>%</b>	<b>53.6</b>

Score -<60

Grade - D

Performance of descriptor- Unsatisfactory

The three reviewers collectively made the decisions on the above marks and grade, by going through the SER and evidence numerous times. While the grade the programme has received at the original marking was the same, the scores given to each criterion were much lower. Then, at the second and third marking the claims and evidence were examined again and the reviewers themselves located some evidence that could have been included in the original report. On re-examining evidence and re-marking all criteria a couple of times, the reviewers were able to ensure that the programme has minimum marks for each criterion, which is admirable. Those marks, however, are not sufficient to lift the entire programme to a passing level. The reviewers strongly feel that the programme must be improved at its all aspects. In some areas, the programme has been recently oriented towards re-evaluating itself. Very promising young academic staff, some committed administrative staff members, and students who want to have a better campus are bright signs indicating that the programme can and must do so much better.



## **Section 7. Commendations and Recommendations**

As we mentioned in the above sections, particularly in section 3, the enthusiasm shown by everyone about what they have achieved so far in terms of developing their university was the most striking and commendable aspect. The academic staff, mostly made of young or mid-career academics, has been running an admirable faculty ably supported by equally young administrative staff. The staff must receive considerable training to run the degree programme at a level of standards comparable with similar programmes at other national universities. The university administration should develop and adopt national level benchmarks.

The rapid growth in infrastructure development was quite visible to anyone visiting the campus premises. Admirably, the state has given priority to the Eastern University when funding the universities. And the administrative staff led by the vice chancellor, the rector and the deans have been successful in winning funding for numerous buildings that are being built in addition to the ones that have been recently built. With several new hostels, the university has given priority to addressing the accommodation needs of the students. The academic staff indicated to us that staff quarters are also going to be built in near future. The reviewers were very happy about that aspect of material resources at the campus. The campus park, however, can be easily transformed into an attractive arboretum by planting more trees such as mango, jack, and other fruits. Certainly, flowers and flora and fauna of different hues will make the university garden more attractive for young students. The students themselves were not happy about the environmental beauty within the campus. The beach at the end of Campus Park can be integrated better into campus life by having regular life-guards, trainers, and swimming hours. These aspects will make the campus one of most attractive in the country.

While being struck by the enthusiasm of both academic and administrative staff, the reviewers also noticed that the staff needs better training. The younger academic staff members must give priority to their own intellectual development. Impressive younger staff have not given thought to applying for competitive foreign scholarships. They are under undue pressure to attend to the routine activities of running the programme. The administrative and supporting staff had not undergone any significant training. With an administration that has been so good at securing funding, it must not be difficult to find enough funding for staff training. Better training at established national universities such as Peradeniya and Colombo would be beneficial to both academic and non-academic staff. Instead of on-campus training conducted by some easily available resource persons, the campus must send its staff to be trained at national level institutes.

The insufficiency of English knowledge among students was identified as a major obstacle that gets in the way of achieving academic excellence. Some academics maintained that only highly motivated students do well in studies and that only about ten percent of students have that level of motivation to master English. It was pointed out that without a comprehensive programme to teach English as a second language, it was

difficult to run the degree programme in languages, which is effectively a programme in English language and literature. The reviewers also strongly felt that a full-fledged ESL programme must be established at the university. Being entirely residential, the campus should be able to conduct extra classes in English in the evening too. The students also repeatedly mentioned that even after completing three to four years at the campus, their competence in English was not good enough to compete with the English graduates of other national universities.

The student counseling activities at the faculty deserve better attention. The administrators and academics need to make a commitment to improve interactions between the students and academics. While the primary focus on infrastructure development is understandable since a young university faculty must develop, the current student population also must be looked after well. The student counseling must not be concerned only with maintaining discipline. The emotional well-being of students should be a priority. The reviewers could feel a great deal of dissatisfaction in the student body.

The faculty has a great library building. A building alone, however, is not a library. The collection of books related to the programme in languages was hardly adequate. Many of the books are donated textbooks, which are used mostly for high school teaching in countries such as the US. There were not enough reading room facilities within the library. The system of cataloguing was also not user-friendly. The circulation records did not show that books are being frequently read. Since Sinhala and Tamils books have been circulated more frequently than some books in English, the library should collect more books in those languages.

There must be enough air-conditioned reading room facilities that can draw students to the library. The methods of teaching should be conducive for making students use the library. The library must use ICT facilities in helping readers to locate materials quickly. The librarian must attend the faculty board meetings.

As the SER writers themselves have indicated in their report and during the meetings with the reviewers, the lack of guidance by senior academics is an obvious weakness in the study programme and in the campus in general. The administration must consider inviting renowned senior academics on Sabbatical appointments by paying them attractive honorariums to teach at the campus until the campus creates their own professors.

The SER mentions the poor rapport with the local community as a weakness. The reviewers did not find a sizable 'community' of people with whom the students can interact. The isolation from the main city was quite visible, and there was no transport

system connecting the campus with the town. A shuttle service between the town and the campus is highly recommended.

The topic of 'poor rapport' seemed relevant to the relationship between the students and the administration: many students complained about the lack of understanding, punctuality, and enthusiasm on the part of non-academics in attending to student matters. Several students of all ethnic backgrounds voiced this concern. At certain administrative offices, the students have to talk to officers through a window because they are not allowed in. This is an entirely unacceptable practice at a campus, since the dignity of students must be protected.

Being a new university, staffed by young and inexperienced academics and administrators, the Trincomalee Campus struggles to assure quality in all aspects of campus life. The reviewers strongly feel that the academic and non-academic staff must be given regular training at main universities in the country. Personnel involved in all fields such as career guidance, student counseling, and quality assurance need extensive and regular training. *Ad hoc* workshops at the Eastern University itself cannot be counted as high quality training.

Provincial universities such as the Eastern, and even more remote campuses such as Trincomalee, must interact with older and major universities in training their staff. Instead of having their staff trained in their own staff development facilities, they must be sent to be trained at main national universities where Staff Development Centers are much more developed and better staffed.

The campus must pay attention to developing a better research culture within the university. The academic staff must be encouraged to regularly engage in research and to get students involved in such activities. The language studies programme should establish a student society, and it should be given funds and other resources to conduct regular creative activities. Such support will encourage students' participation in learning related activities and it will, in turn, create better interactions among the campus community.

A consistent system of rewards, a dean's list or a gold medal for example, must be established in order to identify best performers.

The administrative centers such as dean's office should be staffed by people who can communicate both in Sinhala and Tamil.

There must be in campus residential facilities for the academic staff, and the staff living in the campus must be motivated to attend social activities *organized by* or *organized for* students. Even during the site visit by the reviewers, the academic staff seemed rushing out around four thirty p.m. to catch the campus transport service. At the campus, the much cooler hours between four and eight could be used effectively if the staff is provided with on campus residence.

The fact that the department has two degree programmes is indeed admirable, and the close interactions between the two programmes were also a good practice. The B.A. in Languages, however, seems to be under the shadow of the B.A. in Communication Studies. The department should work towards strengthening the identity of the programme in Languages. In doing so the department must develop the Language component of the programme; at the moment, the programme teaches only English. Sinhala and Tamil language components are not strong enough to deserve the name "B.A. in Languages." The campus can avoid this apparent misnomer by adding some other foreign languages to the programme or by giving sustained attention to the two vernacular languages and literature written in them.

A well-prepared and detailed manual on assessment methods, including marking schemes for each subject or module, needs to be prepared.

The dean must be more active in attending to curricular and co-curricular activities at the campus. Higher administration, made up mostly by academics in subjects such as management and business, need to develop broader vision on education and the role of the humanities in education. The instrumentalist approach to the programme in language/s by the administrators seems to stem from the lack of understanding of the true value of the humanities. Since so many of our Business Studies and Management academics are brought up in a rather insular manner, treating their own area of studies as the most important. Since they have very little exposure to the humanities and social sciences, it is difficult for a programme in the humanities to receive due attention unless some national level interventions are made. At the Trincomalee campus the humanities degree programmes do not appear to have the required independence for them to grow in quality. Therefore, significant de-coupling of Languages from 'Business Studies' might be a path that can be taken, but it, of course, requires intense deliberation by everyone involved.

The external degree programme, which is claimed to have brought extra income to the campus, also needs to be checked for quality. The reviewers found it hard to believe that the department can run an external degree programme while it is obviously struggling to keep its internal programme at an acceptable level of quality. The department's primary focus must be the quality of its internal programme.

## **Section 8. Summary**

The B.A. in Languages at the Trincomalee campus of the Eastern University has recently begun to be concerned with quality and standards. The distance from its own main campus, nearest city, and other metropolitan centers hugely restricts the programme's growth in terms of quality. Perhaps, largely owing to its isolation and remoteness, the department and programme do not have qualified senior scholars such as professors. The lack of experience was visible in every aspect of campus life. The young and enthusiastic lecturers at the campus, department, and programme must be commended for what they have done in order to sustain some quality within their campus. The most admirable aspect of the programme is that it admits students who would not be able to enter the B.A. in English programmes at other established universities. The programme, however, can be a unique one among Sri Lanka's national universities if it is committed to its original name: B.A. in Languages. While as a BA in English the programme would find it difficult match similar programmes at other universities such as Colombo, Kelaniya, and Peradeniya, as a programme in Languages that include both Sinhala and Tamil, as well as other international languages, it will be truly unique. In addition, the current programme and the Trincomalee Campus do not get students with sufficient background in English to run a high quality programme in English. The B.A. in Languages looks to be a realistic goal the campus can reach. And that uniqueness will be its strength. In order to reach that level of quality, the programme requires considerable rethinking and revitalizing. For that, the programme must receive the careful attention of university authorities. At the moment, the B.A. in Languages almost reaches the level of 'satisfactory quality.' With the kind of human and physical resources the campus currently has, even the present level of quality is a reason to celebrate.