



**SUBJECT BENCHMARK STATEMENT  
IN  
MANAGEMENT**

**Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council  
University Grants Commission  
Sri Lanka**

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## FOREWORD

The work in connection with the development of Subject Benchmark Statements was begun in August 2003 as a part of the overall quality assurance framework that supports academic standards and the furtherance and dissemination of good practice in Universities in Sri Lanka.

Subject Benchmark Statements will support and promote quality and standards by:

- Providing universities with a common and explicit reference point for internal and external programme approval and review;
- Guiding and promoting curriculum development, especially in new departments and new universities, and in other institutions of higher education;
- Evolving over time to take account of changes and innovations that reflect subject development and new expectations;
- Providing an authoritative and widely recognized statement of expectations of what is expected of a graduate in a specific (or designated) subject area in a form readily accessible to students, employers and others with a stake in higher education;
- Providing a clear and transparent reference point for External Examiners;
- Assisting international comparison and competitiveness of higher education awards and student achievement.

**SUBJECT BENCHMARK STATEMENT**  
**MANAGEMENT (SPECIAL & GENERAL DEGREES)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Scope and Purpose**

Benchmarking of academic standards is an essential component of quality assurance in the University system. Subject Benchmark Statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programs in a specific subject area. They also represent general expectations about the standards for the award of qualifications at a given level and articulate the attributes and capabilities that those possessing such qualifications should be able to demonstrate.

**1.2 Level of Teaching**

This Subject Benchmark Statements is concerned with General/Special bachelor's degrees in Management & Commerce of 03 years and 04 years duration respectively, conferred by the Faculties of Management & Commerce in Sri Lankan Universities. This program is categorized as being broadly based and general in its scope, rather than being oriented towards specialized areas of management functions (for example, Human Resource, Marketing or Finance) or sector (for example, Hotel Management or Plantation Management).

**1.3 Nature and Extent of the Subject**

Management is a sub discipline of Social Science which studies organizations, their management and the changing external environment in which they operate, while trying to be more effective and efficient in its delivery of goods and services.

**1.3.1 In this regard the subject deals with three main aspects;**

- the study of organizations, their management and the changing external environment in which they operate,
- preparation for and development of a career in management
- enhancement of lifelong learning skills and personal development to contribute to society at large.

**1.3.2** Management & Commerce being a Social Science links closely with a number of other disciplines, such as, with Behavioral and quantitative. Thus, there is an increasing requirement to prepare graduates carefully for continuing their self-education and development after graduation to maintain their knowledge and understanding of rapidly changing areas. The Behavioral and Quantitative subjects assist managers observing human behavior and quantifying and analyzing managerial performance in functional areas of management.

**1.3.3** The Management & Commerce degrees conferred by the Sri Lankan universities are of two types: namely; Special Degrees (duration 04 years) Offered only as Internal degrees (Please see 1.3.3.1, a) Internal degrees, and General Degrees (duration 03 years). Offered as either Internal or External Degrees (Please see 1.3.3.1, b)

a) **Internal degrees:** The internal degrees are conferred to the internal undergraduates who are selected at their merit performance and sent to the universities by the University Grants Commission (UGC). These undergraduates read for the degree by being in the campus enjoying curricular and extracurricular facilities provided by the university throughout the prescribed period with no fees levied upon them. Formal student assessments are done on a continuous basis and bi-annually i.e. Semester basis.

b) **External degrees:** students, with minimal entry qualifications prescribed by the respective universities, are registered under external degree programs and the undergraduates so registered, read for the degree with limited curricular related facilities (syllabi and the annually conducted examinations) provided to them by the university. Some universities conduct a seminar series for these undergraduates at a nominal fee levied on them.

**1.3.4** The curriculum structure of the degree programs stated under 1.3.3 above is basically based on four broad subject areas: namely as follows;

- a) Management based subjects i.e. Principles of Management, Marketing Management, Human Resources Management, and Operations Management etc.
- b) Management support based subjects, i.e. Economics, Accountancy & Finance
- c) Quantitative based subjects, i.e. Mathematics, Statistics, and Operations Research
- d) Human Behavioral based subjects, i.e. Organizational Behavior, Industrial/Organizational Psychology etc.

**1.3.5** Thus, a graduate in Management & Commerce is mandatory, completing successfully, subjects prescribed under these disciplines along with a Research Thesis on a selected management related topic. In addition, a Practical Training undergone for a prescribed period, in a recognized institution as well is recommended in order to earn a General/Special Management & Commerce degree.

**1.3.6** When taking the curriculum structure and the content of each subject included in the internal and external degrees into consideration, they are basically the same with slight changes with the variation of depth and breadth depending on, at what level i.e. General or Special the particular subject is taught.

**1.3.7** The Subject Benchmark Statements in Management & Commerce degrees will only be applicable for the General and Special degrees stated above and if the same SBS are intended to apply for the degree programs stated other than for the above but awarded by the Faculties of Management & Commerce in Sri Lankan Universities, may do so by ensuring the validity and relevance of these SBS for them.

**1.3.8** All institutions shall design their General/Special degrees explicitly in relation to these benchmark standards, so as to be able to demonstrate clearly

and precisely how the knowledge and skills components set out are actually developed and assessed

**1.3.9** These benchmark standards are intended deliberately to be challenging to institutions and to improve the overall quality of provision, so as to meet the dynamic and demanding expectations of undergraduates, employers and all other stakeholders in the business and management arena.

#### **1.4 Scope of Employment of Graduates**

The main employment is available for the graduates as managers in Private and Public sectors locally and overseas and as entrepreneurs, service providers, knowledge providers and knowledge seekers etc.

## **2. SUBJECT AIMS**

### **The main aims of teaching the courses are:**

- a) To produce a knowledgeable, well accomplished skilled and contented student with the appropriate attitudes to face the challenges in achieving excellence with right thinking, creativity, innovation, and research with appropriate entrepreneurial ability of national and international relevance.
- b) To produce readily employable graduates with appropriate Managerial knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- c) To develop in students a range of transferable skills that will be of value in employment and self employment
- d) To provide students with analytical skills and an ability to develop simplifying frameworks for studying the real world
- e) To provide training within an intellectual physical and social environment to achieve excellence in the relevant skills
- f) To develop a student to achieve the status of a leading consultant and provider of advanced consultancy services to the Public and the private sector
- g) Contribute to the government policy making and national development in management including higher professional education in Sri Lanka.

## **3. SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

- 3.1 The degree programs covered by this benchmark standards should provide broad, analytical and integrated study of Management & Commerce
- 3.2 Graduates will be able to demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding of organizations, the external environment in which they operate and how they are managed. There is likely to be an emphasis upon understanding and responding to change and the consideration of the future of organizations and the external environment in which they operate
- 3.3 The inter-relationships among and the integration of these areas are important within the overall student learning experience, and should be demonstrated in the capabilities of successful graduates from all modes of delivery
- 3.4 "Organizations" - this encompasses the internal aspects, functions and processes of organizations including their diverse nature, purposes, structures, governance, operations and management, together with the individual and corporate behaviors

and cultures which exist within and between organizations and their influence upon the external environment.

- 3.5 "External environment" - this encompasses a wide range of factors, including economic, environmental, ethical, legal, political, sociological and technological, together with their effects at local, national and international levels upon the strategy, behavior and management of organizations.
- 3.6 "Management" - this encompasses the various processes, procedures and practices for effective management of organizations. It includes theories, models, frameworks, tasks and roles of management together with rational analysis and other processes of decision making within organizations and in relation to the external environment.
- 3.7 Within the framework of these main areas, it is expected that graduates will also be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the following:
  - a) **MARKETS** - the development and operation of markets for resources, goods and services
  - b) **CUSTOMERS** - customer expectations, service and orientation
  - c) **FINANCE** - the sources, uses and management of finance; the use of accounting and other information systems for managerial applications
  - d) **PEOPLE** - the management and development of people within organizations
  - e) **OPERATIONS** - the management of resources and operations
  - f) **INFORMATION SYSTEMS** - the development, management and exploitation of information systems and their impact upon organizations
  - g) **COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY** - the comprehension and use of relevant communication and information technologies for application in business management
  - h) **BUSINESS AND/OR PUBLIC POLICY AND STRATEGY** - the development of appropriate policies and strategies within a changing environment, to meet stakeholder interests
  - i) **CONTEMPORARY & PERVASIVE ISSUES** - a range of contemporary and pervasive issues is expected to be addressed. These may change within the lifetime of these benchmark standards but the following are illustrative examples: innovation, e-commerce, creativity and enterprise, knowledge management, sustainability, globalization, business ethics and corporate responsibility, values and norms.

## **4. SKILLS AND ATTITUDES**

### **4.1 Skills**

Graduates are expected to be able to demonstrate a range of cognitive and intellectual skills together with techniques specific to public and private sector management. They should also demonstrate relevant personal and interpersonal skills.

#### **4.1.1 Generic Skills**

- a. Cognitive skills of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis. This includes the capability to identify assumptions, evaluate statements in terms of evidence, to detect false logic or reasoning, to identify implicit values, to define terms adequately and generalize appropriately.

- b. Effective problem solving and decision making using appropriate quantitative and qualitative skills including identifying, formulating and solving managerial problems. The ability to create, evaluate and assess a range of options together with the capacity to apply ideas and knowledge to a range of situations.
- c. Effective communication, oral and in writing, using a range of media which are widely used in management, for example, the preparation and presentation of management reports.
- d. Numeric and quantitative skills including data analysis, interpretation and extrapolation. The use of models of management problems and phenomena.
- e. Effective use of Communication and Information Technology (CIT) for management applications.
- f. Effective self-management in terms of time, planning and behavior, motivation, self-starting, individual initiative and enterprise.
- g. Learning to learn and developing an appetite for learning; reflective, adaptive and collaborative learning.
- h. Self awareness, openness and sensitivity to diversity in terms of people, cultures, business and management issues.
- i. Effective performance, within a team environment including: leadership, team building, and influencing and project management skills.
- j. Interpersonal skills of effective listening, negotiating, persuasion and presentation.

#### **4.1.2 Subject Specific skills**

- a. Abilities to design, plan and conduct research into management issues, either individually or as part of a team for projects/dissertations/presentations. This requires familiarity with a range of data, research sources and appropriate methodologies and for such to inform the overall learning process.
- b. Management specific specialized skills in relation to Human Resource, Marketing, Finance and Operations Management

## **4.2 Attitudes**

- 4.2.1 Graduates should demonstrate their ability to work effectively and efficiently in a proactive manner with a sense of ethical and social responsibility with integrity and commitment.
- 4.2.2 It is recognized that all programs covered by these benchmark standards need to address issues at the Sri Lankan and international levels.

## **5. TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

- 5.1 There should be learning and teaching strategy, which makes explicit and demonstrable the appropriateness of the learning and teaching methods used in relation to the anticipated learning outcomes and skills being developed, linked to the mode of delivery and the student profile.

- 5.2 There should be integration between theory and practice by a variety of means according to the mode of delivery including: work experience or placement, exposure to management issues, visits, and inputs from visiting practicing managers and using local case studies.

## **6. ASSESSMENT METHODS**

- 6.1 There should be an assessment strategy which makes explicit and demonstrable the appropriateness of the assessment methods used in relation to the learning and teaching strategy adopted and the anticipated learning outcomes and skills being developed.
- 6.2 Overall the assessment methods should aim to assess achievement, both formatively and summative, over the whole of the degree program. It is recognized that achievement in certain (skills) components may be difficult to assess. Nevertheless graduates will be expected to have attained appropriate achievement in knowledge, understanding and skills taken as a whole.

## **7. MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS (BENCHMARK STANDARDS)**

- The standards of achievement expected of graduates in Management & Commerce (General /Special) degrees are set out in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 below. These relate to the areas of subject knowledge, understanding and skills set out in sections 3 and 4 above.
- Two categories which differentiate graduate achievement have been identified, namely threshold and typical. These are based upon the perceived national and international norms, operating across the management area. 'Threshold' describes the minimum to be achieved by all General/Special graduates. 'Typical' is set at the standard which is currently achieved by the majority of General/Special graduates. Paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 seek to describe, particularly for the benefit of employing organizations, the capabilities that can be expected of such graduates.
- The factors which have been selected as the basis for differentiation between the two categories of achievement are the range and consistency of demonstration of:
  - breadth, depth, integration and application of knowledge and understanding
  - subject-specific and intellectual skills
  - personal and interpersonal skills
  - learning skills
  - capability to deal with uncertainty and complexity
  - the capabilities of evaluation, reflection, creativity and originality.

### **7.1 Threshold standard**

On graduating with a General/Special degree in Management & Commerce, students will typically have:

- knowledge and understanding of the key areas of management, the relationships among these and their application
- demonstrated competence within the range of subject-specific and intellectual skills

- a view of management which is predominantly influenced by guided learning with a limited critical perspective.

## **7.2 Typical standard**

On graduating with a General/Special degree in Management & Commerce, students will typically:

- have a wide knowledge and understanding of the broad range of areas of public and private sector management and the detailed relationships between these, their application and their importance in an integrated framework
- consistently demonstrate a command of subject-specific skills including application of knowledge, as well as proficiency in intellectual skills
- have a view of management which is influenced by a variety of learning sources including guided learning, team work and independent study
- be distinguished from the threshold category by their enhanced capacity to develop and apply their own perspectives to their studies, to deal with uncertainty and complexity, to explore alternative solutions, to demonstrate critical evaluation and to integrate theory and practice in a wide range of situations.

## 8. ANNEX1. MEMBERS OF THE BENCHMARK GROUP

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