



**SUBJECT BENCHMARK STATEMENT
IN
FINE ARTS**

**Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council
University Grants Commission
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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

FINE ARTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Subject Benchmark Statement – Scope and Purpose

This Benchmark Statement for the subject of Fine Arts has been prepared under the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the University Grants Commission. The objectives of the statement is to provide general guidelines to the academic community engaged in teaching Fine Arts on [a] Core areas of the subject and characteristics of degrees in Fine Arts, [b] expected standards for the award of the degrees at General and Honors [special] levels, [c] expected attributes and capabilities that the Fine Arts graduates should possess, and [d] current and future needs of the country and the community at large. It is expected that this subject benchmarking would highlight and ensure maintaining high standards and quality of the degree programs in Fine Arts in the universities, which teach the subject of fine Arts. The subject of Fine Arts is one of the most popular subjects in the universities in Sri Lanka. Students who are keen in the arts, who possess the aptitude and talents in creative arts, dance, drama, music, and many other related subjects in fine arts, and experience in appreciation of arts select the special course in Fine Arts leading to the Honors degree. Contribution of fine Arts graduates to the culture and aesthetic experience of the people has been memorable. Some of the most renowned and prominent artists, musicians, dramatists, Cinema directors and Television program producers and presenters have been closely involved in the academic work in general of the fine Arts departments in national universities and affiliated institutes. Considering the love of arts that exists amongst the younger generation of the country, Fine Arts studies can render a great service for catering to the needs of the people.

1.2 Level of Teaching

Fine Arts will be taught both at the General and Special degree levels in the universities. It is also possible to conduct Certificate courses in music, dance, drama and Image Arts for professionals and foreigners. Some courses can be offered as one of the subjects for the General Degree of three year duration. Special [Honors] Degree in Fine Arts is, like all other honors degree programs in Humanities, are of four year duration. Fine Arts special students will be allowed to select interdisciplinary combinations of courses. For example a student specializing in drama would be allowed to take a few course units in Design or Sculpture. Fine Arts special students may have the freedom of choice of a variety of subjects from other disciplines such as languages, history, journalism, graphic designing etc.

1.3 The Nature and Scope of Fine Arts Studies

The subject of Fine Arts is one of the most important and crucial fields of study in humanities, which enjoys a prime place in the curriculum of the national universities and institutes of Higher education. It covers a wide range of areas, most of which bear direct impact and relevance to maintaining high standards in appreciation of

arts, understanding of the folk arts and dances, enriching social interaction and national harmony. Fine Arts studies encourage and enhance the study of local and international arts, crafts, folk arts and culture while providing students with opportunities to develop leadership qualities.

[A] **Justification of teaching Fine Arts in national universities:** There is a rising demand for the subject of Fine Arts among the students, mainly due to their love for performing and visual arts. Further, aesthetic studies had been a prominent component in the curriculum of education in Sri Lanka for a long time. Students of Fine Arts will aspire to become well rounded graduates with knowledge in a variety of arts, crafts, performing skills, and ability to face challenges in modern times more successfully than most other graduates. Fine Arts can serve as the catalyst in the divergent subjects in Humanities and Social sciences.

[b] Prospects for interdisciplinary studies and research.

[c] Ability to deal with the expectations of modern society of an artist

[d] Ability to face the challenge of the demands in the job market.

[e] The use of modern technology /computers and IT facilities in teaching and research in the field of Fine Arts.

The study of Fine Arts places emphasis on the problems prevailing at schools and other institutes where the subject is taught but the curriculum is limited only to elementary and conventional education in dance and music and drawing. At university level education in Fine Arts aspires to encompass all areas in the subject concentrating mainly on classical as well as new developments in the fine arts. Departments of Fine Arts can focus on incorporating regional arts, crafts and dance and theatrical traditions. For example, folk arts, dance, drama, song, crafts etc. in the northern and eastern regions can be included in the curriculum for Fine Arts in the universities and institutes of those regions and the same can be done by the universities in the south and upcountry by introducing courses on the arts, crafts, and dance and drama in those area. Then the Fine Arts Departments in the north, south and the centre can launch new study programs and cultural events bringing together exponents of folk arts in their respective areas.

1.4 Scope of Employment of Fine Arts Graduates

Employability of Fine Arts graduates has always been satisfactory.

They are employed in the state sector as school teachers, as the subject has been introduced into the School curriculum from grade 6 onwards.

In schools, especially for the Advanced levels, Drama and Theatre has become a very popular subject. Students, who obtain good grades at Advanced Levels for Drama and Theatre, select Fine Arts upon admission to the university. With the growing number of students in schools offering Fine Arts subjects, opportunities for Fine Arts graduates to be employed as teachers to grow.

Fine Arts Graduates can be employed as cultural Officers in charge of the Cultural Centers established and maintained by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in the universities and many other areas.

They can become free lance journalists and media persons. Most media centers [TV] like to employ the Fine Arts Graduates due to their talents and skills in a variety of arts.

Some graduates making use of their knowledge and practical training especially become directors and script writers of Tele dramas and find employment in the film industry.

In addition to prospects for employment in the government schools, there are opportunities for Fine Arts Graduates to join International Schools as instructors in dance, drama and music.

It is possible for the Fine Arts Graduates to become self employed, as a result of ever growing demand for dance, drama and music.

2. SUBJECT AIMS

Defining Principles:

Fine Arts is a versatile and academic discipline characterized by the rigorous and critical study of the subject, which is becoming very popular, both at school and university levels. It is concerned with the production, reception and interpretation of various forms of dance, drama, music and new forms of film and Tele drama. The study of Fine Arts develops a flexible, creative and responsive openness of mind, and the maturity and experience to engage in dialogue with traditional and modern cultures and values. The subject of Fine Arts has a special role in sustaining in society a constantly renewed knowledge and undisturbed continuation and innovation of the arts and other cultural forms.

Aims of Fine Arts courses should be directed at producing graduates with thorough knowledge of every important aspects in fine Arts i.e. Arts, music, dance, drama of the subject. Graduates should possess both theoretical and practical knowledge of the areas they specialize in. Students of dance can become exponents of major dance forms of Sri Lanka and at least one or two Indian dance forms. Those who take courses in music will possess sound knowledge of the classical and modern musical traditions, history as well as theory and practice. In Fine Arts music courses will concentrate on the folk music as well as folk music of South Asia as well as other musical traditions of the world. Drama and Theatre courses will provide knowledge of the history of the world drama as well as history, evolution and the development of indigenous theatre traditions. In this stream, teaching will be carried out mostly through practical work. Students of Drama and Theatre in addition to the lectures on theory and history will gain instruction and training in acting, costume making, make up, stage lighting as well as theatre music.

3. SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Fine Arts imparts a thorough and in-depth knowledge encompassing all the major genres in the discipline, i.e. Dance, Drama, Music, Painting, Sculpture, song, Image Arts, film and Video Making and Design etc. Courses in Fine Arts were traditionally theory oriented, which in general covered the history of the arts and other related subjects. However, as a result of innovations in the curriculum and needs of modern times, there's

a tendency to incorporate more practical components in the fine arts courses. It would not be easy for Fine Arts Graduates to find employment by following only theory oriented courses. Performance skills in what they teach are expected from the graduates of Fine Arts. As a result of this, new courses such as the Image Art, film making, Video making, Graphic Designing and several others have been included in the curriculum of Fine Arts. Students of Fine Arts are guided to gain knowledge and practice in the folk arts and drama too.

In the subject of Fine Arts, almost all the local and foreign traditions of Dance, Drama, theatre, Music, sculpture etc. should be in-depth, comprehensive study areas. These arts or disciplines need constant practice and rehearsing for long hours. Hence they need out-of class room practice, training and active participation in the folk festivals and rituals. For example, students of dance, drama and music cannot gain a sound practical knowledge by confining themselves to class room teaching and learning.

Fine Arts Courses, by nature, are interdisciplinary. They are also multi-disciplinary by nature, as the student need to take course in IT, Graphic Designing and Mass communication as well.

Basic as well as advanced theories in Aesthetics, Dramaturgy, poetics and music form the core components in the curriculum in Fine Arts. Students with talent and aptitude will be trained in gathering, interpreting and analyzing data. They will be made aware of the relevance and usefulness of some of the arts they learn for the society in diverse ways. Fine arts graduates are the ambassadors of national culture who can contribute immensely to peace and harmony among diverse communities in the country. Fine Arts subjects are unique in their capacity for communication without words the deepest sensibilities and emotions of the people across the world. As human beings love to enjoy the pleasure of arts and seek every form of entertainment through artistic productions, the service of Fine Arts graduates would always be needed. In a country like Sri Lanka, which is of pluralistic nature by religion, race and language, it is the Fine Arts graduates who can make people forget those differences and unite as members of one family. No other discipline in the humanities or social sciences can claim to have such attributes and powers as Fine Arts.

As a result of the in-depth knowledge in a number of arts, and the discipline acquired through devoted and constant practice, the Fine Arts graduates will be well equipped to face every kind of challenge. As a result of this Fine Arts Graduates will be fully equipped to compete successfully in the job market. They will be able to learn and adjust themselves quickly to new environments and requirements of most of the professions.

4. SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

4.1 Skills

4.1.1 Generic Skills

- Ability for independent thinking and understanding
- Ability to undertake responsibilities

- Communication skills gained through knowledge in music, dance and drama
- Ability to use IT
- Excellent interpersonal relations and experience in team work
- Excellent management skills gained through field research and training in Drama and Theatre
- Ability to conduct field research
- Development of leadership qualities
- Ability to become good teachers of fine arts subjects
- Ability to become good decision makers in fine arts
- Ability to become good organizers and coordinators of concerts and other type of shows
- Ability to become good connoisseurs

4.1.2 Subject Specific Skills

- Ability to appreciate and criticize a work of art
- Ability to write drama and film scripts
- Experience in creative writing and evaluation of arts
- Ability to compare foreign work of arts with local ones
- Experience in all important aspects in photography
- Skills in the art and technology of Video making
- Experience in systematic use of the library
- Experience in using multi-media and power point.
- Ability to learn from folk traditions and blend them with modern traditions
- Presentation skills
- Performance skills
- Theoretical and practical knowledge in the major art forms such as painting, sculpture, dance, drama, music, theatre, filming, video making are the most common attributes of Fine Arts courses.

4.2 Attitudes

- Ethical practices- An ideal Fine Arts Graduate is aware of both personal and social ethics. They learn importance of good ethical practices through team work, and association with renowned artists and craftsmen. They will learn to love both culture and nature.
- Proactive Approach: Courses in fine arts may be designed in such a way that graduates would be ready to take proactive decisions. Field work, Team work, involvement in the Theatre, Cinema and Television productions will help develop proactive approach. As students and exponents of Arts they will cultivate humane attitudes towards fellow human beings.

5. TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

- Courses designed to impart both theoretical and practical knowledge.
- Conventional teaching methods using chalk and board in lectures.
- Modern teaching methods using electronic equipment and multi media
- Use of video, films and slides
- Invited lectures by experts, performing artists or celebrities in the field of drama, cinema and music.
- Participation of staff members in student presentations
- Individual attention by instructors to students' surveys and research
- Organizing field trips for students
- Training students in mask and costume making
- Encouraging students to engage in creative activities and production of plays etc.
- Group performances
- Practice, demonstrations and exhibitions
- Visiting and participation in folk festivals and rituals
- Learning costume making, mask making, and stage properties
- Voice training
- Training in choreography

6. ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Assessment method must be chosen according to its appropriateness to the course. A combination of continuous assessment and end -of – course assessments could be adopted. Whenever it is possible students should be given feedback on their progress and attainment.

- Following standard assessment methods practiced in the Sri Lankan university system
- Written/closed book examinations
- Assignments [Two assignments per semester for which 40% of the marks allocated]
- Individual and group presentations
- End-semester and mid-semester tests
- Essays
- Project reports
- Assessment of case studies
- 50% of the marks given for practical work in Drama and Theatre and Music
- Assessment of answer scripts and students' productions by external examiners
- Assessment of the final year dissertation: compulsory
- Viva-Voce examinations for the Special final year students

7. MAINTAINING STANDARDS

- Peer observation of teaching and practical training
- Student evaluation of teaching
- Moderation of question papers
- Second marking of examinations

- Periodic revision of the curriculum
- Drama, film , and Video productions by students
- Participation in inter-university and national competitions for drama
- Exhibitions of paintings and sculpture by students and staff
- Subject Review by non-university experts
- Student presentations
- Workshops and Seminars
- Link or exchange programs between departments of Fine Arts
- Publication of research articles and creative work by staff and students

8. STUDENT ATTAINMENT AND BENCHMARK LEVEL (STANDARD)

Student achievements is graded from the minimum acceptable knowledge and skill levels in the areas specified in this statement [Threshold Level] to an excellent performance where graduates have demonstrated range of knowledge, competencies and skills at an advanced level [Good Level]

The Benchmark levels given below generally apply [a] to General Degree which includes Fine Arts as a subject, and [b] to Special Degree in Fine Arts. The two levels of achievements identified are as follows:

Threshold Level: The minimum acceptable standard or Benchmark to be achieved by a graduate who obtains a second class lower division or a pass.

Good Level: This is the expected standard or bench mark level to be gained by a graduate who secures a Second Class upper division or First Class Honors.

B.A. General Degree [Fine Arts as a subject]

Threshold Level. A graduate should	Good Level A graduate should
Demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the main genres of Fine Arts	Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of Fine Arts and be familiar with the classical forms of fine Arts
Demonstrate adequate knowledge of the history and evolution of the Fine Arts and skills in performance	Demonstrate in-depth knowledge in the history and evolution of the subject and ability to perform
Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the major works in the classical art and architecture	Demonstrate excellent understanding of the major artistic and architectural achievements of classical times and knowledge of the modern trends
Possess a good knowledge of the diverse genres in the classical and modern dance and drama and music	Possess an in-depth, critical and analytical knowledge of the diverse genres and styles in the classical and modern dance, drama and music
Have developed high standards in performing as musicians, dancers or actors	Have developed high standards in performing and producing individual creative work or drama or theatre productions

Threshold Level: A graduate should	Good Level: A graduate should
Be familiar with the major trends in arts in the international arena	Demonstrate familiarity and understanding of modern artistic, musical, dance or cinematic traditions
Demonstrate adequate knowledge in the new trends and genres in modern Sri Lankan, theatre, Cinema and music	Demonstrate in-depth knowledge in the new trends and genres in modern Sri Lankan Arts, Theatre, Cinema, and the impact of electronic media on arts
Be familiar with new developments in dance, drama and music, and skills in performance	Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the modern development in drama, dance, music, and skills in performing

Special Degree in Fine Arts

Threshold : A graduate should	Good : A graduate should
Demonstrate basic knowledge of the history and evolution of Fine Arts and ability to define what is art?	Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the Fine Arts with focus on the fine arts of Sri Lanka in classical times and familiarity with diverse interpretations of art.
Demonstrate basic knowledge of the history and evolution of Fine Arts in Sri Lanka	Demonstrate excellent knowledge of the history and evolution of Fine Arts in Sri Lanka and ability to perform in dance, drama or music
Possess a good knowledge of the major artistic works of the classical period and their impact on modern arts	Possess an in-depth knowledge of the major works of Art in the classical times and understanding of their interaction with modern arts as well as folk arts
Possess good understanding of diverse artistic traditions of Sri Lanka and India focusing on one major art form	Possess in-depth and analytical knowledge of the diverse artistic traditions of Sri Lanka and India and ability to perform as dancer, musician , dramatist etc.
Be familiar with the major concepts of aesthetic and literary criticism of India and Sri Lanka and their impact on the fine arts of Sri Lanka	Have an excellent knowledge of the classical Indian and Sri Lankan concepts of aesthetics and literary criticism and their impact on the artists and their work of Sri Lanka
Possess a basic knowledge of the major trends and concepts of modern theories and concepts of aesthetics	Possess in-depth knowledge of the major trends and concepts in the western aesthetics. Be familiar with the impact of those concepts and theories on fine arts and artists of Sri Lanka
Possess a basic knowledge of the significance of arts in the popular culture and as media communication.	Possess an in-depth and practical knowledge of the significance of arts- visual and performing- as media of communication and awareness of the impact of the popular culture

Threshold :A graduate should	Good :A graduate should
Possess a general knowledge of the new trends and developments in the field of arts, theatre and cinema and the usefulness of electronic media and IT.	Possess an excellent understanding of the new trends and developments in the fields of arts, music, theatre and cinema in Sri Lanka focusing on the use of traditional and modern instruments and methods and skills in using It, multimedia etc. in the field of fine arts.
Be familiar with the major classical concepts of aesthetic and literary criticism of India and the west and their impact on the fine arts of Ari Lanka	Have an excellent knowledge of the classical Indian and Western concepts of aesthetics and literary criticism and their impact on the artists of Sri Lanka and their work
Posses a basic knowledge of the major trends and concepts of modern and post-modern theories and concepts of aesthetics	Possess –in-depth knowledge of the major trends and concepts in the modern and post-modern western aesthetics
Possess a general knowledge of the new trends and developments in the field of arts , theatre, cinema and Television and the usefulness of electronic media and IT	Possess an excellent knowledge of the new trends and developments in the field of visual arts, music, dance, theater, cinema and television in Sri Lanka focusing on the use of traditional and modern theories in Fine Arts.

9. ANNEX1. MEMBERS OF THE BENCHMARK GROUP

Prof. Udaya Meddegama	University of Peradeniya
Dr. Michel Fernando	University of Peradeniya
Dr. Sumathy Sivamohan	University of Peradeniya
Dr. B. D. Nandadeva	University of Kelaniya
Mr. Chandrasiri Bogamuwa	University of Kelaniya
Dr. U. G. Gunasekera	University of Kelaniya
Dr. (Ms.) A. N. Krishnaveney	University of Jaffna