

Report of the Peer Team
on Institutional Assessment and Accreditation of the
University of Kerala
March 09 – 14, 2003

Section 1 : Introduction

Originally established as the University of Travancore, on November 1, 1937, it is now the University of Kerala after the formation of the state of Kerala in 1956. Thus, it is not only the oldest University in Kerala, but also one of the oldest in whole of India. Others came to be known as Universities in Kerala such as Mahatma Gandhi University established at Kottayam and CUSAT at Cochin came into existence much later. The University of Kerala has always been striving hard to fulfil its goals embodied in its motto which stands for the duality of knowledge and action and avows that true knowledge manifests itself in action. The university also has a clear vision statement reflecting the complete range of academic activities of the University including the development of affiliated Arts and Science colleges and emphasizes on upgrading and maintaining the quality of higher education and launching innovative courses keeping in view the changing national and global scenario.

The University as it is today consists of 41 PG teaching and research departments, 14 centres on area studies, seven university Institutes of Technology, (UIT), ten Teacher Education Centres and a college of engineering. The University has support services like Computer centre, Library, University Press, University Science Instrumentation Centre, Engineering Unit, Health Centre and Department of Student Services.

The university has two campuses namely the main campus at Kariavattom, accommodating 32 academic departments and the city campus accommodates 9 departments. The university operates some programmes like UITs, Teacher Education centre and the college of Engineering on the self financing mode with about 3000

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students. All other regular PG programmes account to a student strength of 2200 with about 200 teachers on roll both regular and contract appointments. The administrative set up in the main campus consists of regular administrative sections and also a coordinating unit for CSS.

The university has been adopting various measures to keep up with the changing scene in education in terms of curriculum, syllabi, pattern of imparting education, examining system and also administrative reforms including the self-financing courses. These aspects have been considered using the criterion wise analysis in the following pages.

The University has submitted self-study report (SSR) as per the guidelines and volunteered for assessment and accreditation by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore. The peer team constituted by NAAC consists of Prof. K.L. Kamal, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Rajasthan, as Chairperson and Prof. B. Viswanathan, Department of Chemistry, Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai; Dr. T.A.V. Murthy, Director, INFLIBNET, Ahmedabad, Prof. B.L. Barnes, Professor of Psychology (Retd.), SNDT Women's University, Mumbai and Dr. R. Karpaga Kumaravel, Department of Educational Technology, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli as members. The peer team visit is coordinated by Dr. G. Srinivas, Deputy Adviser, NAAC and assisted by Shri V. Uma Shankar, NAAC. The team after visiting all its constituents, careful analysis of documents, data, interacting with statutory officers, faculty, staff and students has prepared this report as per the frame work of NAAC

Section II: Criterionwise analysis

Crterion 1: Curricular Aspects

For any university which strives to be a leader in education, Curricular aspect is the most important component and this should be dynamic and also flexible to adopt to the changing situations and demands arising out of the changes in the manufacturing and development process of the surroundings and the country as a whole. If this criterion were to be adopted many of our educational institutions may not fulfill these needs in the appropriate time scale as their reforming and reformatting processes of their curriculum is

a long and time consuming one and in this sense the university of Kerala also has miles to go even though they seem to have dynamic system. This may perhaps be associated with the university's long chain of controls, which are safety measures, but the University is well advised to remove the bottlenecks for the implementation of new programmes in time, keeping in view the fast changing technological revolution.

For example this University conducts as many as 186 programmes mostly PG, M.Phil and Ph.D and these must be highly dynamic systems since at this level the rate of obsolescence is high and also the demands are controlled by the rapid changes that take place in Science and Engineering.

This university also conducts another 300 courses in the affiliated colleges and the system has to be made more dynamic and procedures have to be evolved for this. The university has been introducing vocational subjects at the first degree level, restructuring the existing programmes including vocational components, field training, project works etc and by offering short complementary programmes such as certificate diploma etc. A University which aims to achieve excellence in its educational standards, the relevance of these types of structured diploma and certificate courses has to be evaluated carefully. All the PG programmes in the Departments of the university have been restructured under credit and semester system to give academic autonomy and flexibility and also probably innovative and need based course can be designed depending on the special interests and aptitudes of teachers and requirements of the students. However no data could be provided to substantiate these ideal postulates. Secondly no comparison is provided how far these new concepts have improved the teaching learning processes in the university. How far the new concepts have given rise to new evaluation procedures and how the changes and their effects have been monitored have not been made clear.

The university has claimed many aspects in their CSS scheme and the concept of modular curricula really needs careful examination in Indian context whether it can give rise to all round development in curricular capabilities of the students. No evaluation data are available to make judgments on how these modular concepts of curricula has specially suited to this university and how the university has responded to the immediate needs of the surroundings and also to that of the nation? Teacher evaluation has been introduced



in this university but typical data and evaluation procedure need to be examined thoroughly.

The experience of semesterisation of the PG programmes in affiliated colleges has to be examined in the context of adopting them in various other educational institutions in the country. Secondly the feed back system from affiliated colleges and the universities response time and mode of response have to be examined for suitable adoption elsewhere.

Board of studies (83 in number) are the vital links between the university and academic programmes. The chain of implementation is through academic council based on the recommendations of boards of studies and expert committees. The university could have taken some typical examples and explained how the recommendations are carried through in time scale and also in the spirit of the origin of the recommendations.

However, it is heartening to note that syllabi are revised regularly, once in three years. The CSS was introduced in 1996 itself.

Project work appears to be a universal unique identity of this university. This is a special feature that deserves to be adopted at other universities.

The university, according to their mission statements, has generated manpower in emerging areas by designing new courses.

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning and Evaluation

The university adopts within the statutory reservations, a student selectivity pattern based on entrance examination or on the basis of student's knowledge and aptitude. In general the departments are attracting best students from within the state of Kerala but not so much from other states. This aspect has to be looked into especially in the context that education is to be a global demand today.

The semester system administered, and monitored by the department council is based on continuous assessment procedure and 40 % weightage being given for continuous

assessment and 60% for the end semester examination. The exact procedure followed can be evaluated periodically by an internal system and suitable remedial measures can be taken to avoid subjectivity and favoritism.

The teaching staff strength (179 regular staff, + 21 contract appointments + 41 part-time faculty) appears to be low at the rate of 4.25 per department and this may be lower in some departments. This is one aspect the university should consider taking into account the strength of the university in certain disciplines. The teaching faculty seems to have good record of research, refresher course conducting and attendance and conducting, participating in national and international conferences. However 35 positions have already been notified.

Teachers' selection procedure appears to be well formulated but it is also to be seriously thought that more than 50 faculty positions are still vacant. Another aspect of concern is the average age of the faculty is above 50 and this also needs careful attention. Teacher evaluation can be assessed periodically.

Linkages with other institutions are in the form of MOUs and also students carrying out project work in other institutions. A record and evaluation of these linkages would be useful in terms of joint publication or participation of the scientists of other institutions in the activities of the university.

The extension activities and field placement for hands on experience are implemented in some departments. The examining system is organized well and it can be modernized.

In distance education, the lessons and other materials have to be structured in the self-instructional modular form and instructional system has to be supplemented by multimedia learning processes.

Criterion 3: Research, Consultancy and Extension

Research activities in the university are centred on various research programmes like M.Phil and Ph.D. The distribution of students in various departments in each of these disciplines is given in the following table.



S.No	Department	Ph D
1.	Aquatic Biology and Fisheries	53
2.	Arabic	-
3.	Archaeology	-
4.	Biochemistry	39
5.	Biotechnology	-
6.	Botany	9
7.	Chemistry	23
8.	Commerce	20
9.	Communication & Journalism	1
10.	Computer science	2
11.	Demography	8
12.	Economics	15
13.	Education	11
14.	Institute of English	13
15.	Environmental Science	3
16.	Futures studies	5
17.	Geology	4
18.	German	1
19.	Hindi	8
20.	History	7
21.	Institute of Distance Education	2
22.	Library & Information Science	2
23.	Linguistics	1
24.	Institute of Management in Kerala	2
25.	Islamic Studies	-
26.	Law	1
27.	Malayalam	2
28.	Mathematics	2
29.	Music	1
30.	Optoelectronics	2
31.	Oriental Res. Inst & Manuscript library	9
32.	Philosophy	1

33.	Physics	13
34.	Political Science	10
35.	Psychology	10
36.	Russian	1
37.	Sanskrit	9
38.	Sociology	8
39.	Statistics	3
40.	Tamil	6
41.	Zoology	14

The data in this table is a direct reflection of the strength of the research activity in each of the department. Another way of looking at this information is publication from each of the departments and the relevant data are given in the following table.

S.No	Department	Number of Ph D per faculty	Number of publications per faculty
1.	Aquatic Biology and Fisheries	6.6	11
2.	Biochemistry	4	31
3.	Chemistry	3.3	11.3
4.	Commerce	3	12.3
5.	Economics	3	9.4
6.	Education	2.75	8
7.	Institute of English	1.6	6
8.	Hindi	2.7	12
9.	History	1.75	5.5
10.	Malayalam	0.33	8.8
11.	Physics	2.2	13.5
12.	Political Science	1.4	11.3
13.	Psychology	2	2
14.	Zoology	2.8	8.8
15.	Library & Information Science	0.4	8.8



The data given in the table above shows that one third of the departments are reasonably performing well with respect to research activities. The departments are pursuing research in Thrust areas.

The Departments have also been engaged in carrying out sponsored projects executed projects Botany (8), Biochemistry(10,4),Physics (5,2), Computer science (4), Demography (4,3), Aquatic Biology and Fisheries (10,10), Economics (3,6)Political Science (2,2) and Zoology totaling nearly 10 departments which is only about 25% of the total number of departments. (The numbers in the brackets refer to the number of completed projects and the number of on-going projects. The various linkages with other research organizations have been mentioned and the level of interactions is evaluated.

The university staff has won several awards, honors and fellowships and the university also has recognized by conferring eminent persons with D.Sc or D.Litt degrees. Research consultancy is specific to some departments (Botany, Demography, Kerala Studies, Oriental Research Institute and Commerce. Aquatic biology and Fisheries and Futures studies) and this can be strengthened and local needs can be effectively utilized for the growth of this activity. Some departments have obtained UGC assistance under the SAP status in the form of DRA and COSIST, like the Aquatics Biology and Fisheries, Education Botany.

Various extension activities in the form of exhibition, popular science lectures, and campaigns have been organized by the university. More than 15 professional societies are having branches in the university and this is a healthy trend for possible interaction with other peers in various areas.

The university departments have been considered for special assistance programme and other supports by the national agencies and also the university have also evolved various facilitating mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of their research programmes. All these activities are desirable but the working of these activities needs some kind of monitoring.

Criterion 4: Infrastructure and Learning Resources

The university has nearly 400 acres of land at Kariavattom campus, the senate house campus in the city and the information and study centres.

The facilities provided in these campuses are: 32 departments of teaching and research, Engineering Unit, Campus administration Unit, CSS office, University science instrumentation centre, academic staff college, campus library, the VCs quarters, health centre, two women's hostels, men's hostels, teacher's hostel, guest house, cafeteria. Quarters and other facilities are provided in the Kariavattom campus. The construction and maintenance of the buildings and roads and services are under the Engineering unit, the administration by the administrative unit while CSS office takes care of the academic programmes of the departments. The sports facility is provided in the city campus and the mobility is provided for in terms of 4 buses and 10 small vehicles.

In addition to support to maintain the laboratories, the university has provided for facilities like animal house, green house, herbarium, Insectariums and observatory. Some special laboratories are provided for, which include Radio tracer laboratory, Tissue culture laboratory, Molecular biology laboratory, Microbiology laboratory, Materials Science Laboratory, Physics Laboratory, nano structured materials laboratory, Thin film laboratory, Optical communication laboratory, spectroscopy laboratory, speckle interferometry laboratory, computer laboratory, language laboratory, photography and dark rooms, cold rooms, radio field station, etc. A special instrumentation facility is provided for with a few of spectroscopic techniques. Adequate class room facilities are available and few rooms have necessary project ional facilities.

The library and the services are the best possible and modernization of the library facilities with 64 kbps connectivity is already established.

The university has a University science instrumentation service for servicing instruments.

The physical education department is maintaining a good synthetic tract for athletes and also has enough gymnasium facilities.

Each of the departments is having an well-organized departmental library.



The computer centre of the university is also performing various other services for computerization of data and other details. University health centre attends to the medical needs and monitoring of the health of staff and students. The university has embarked on a campus wide networking.

Criterion 5: Student Support and Progression

The university has many fellowships including the national fellowships offered by CSIR, UGC, ICMR, ICHR, and ICSSR for the research scholars. However, all the research scholars are given fellowship by the university in the form JRF and SRF. The Alumni association is organized on the department basis and has been contributing to the growth of the department in terms of support for infra structure and even for placement. However there is no overall central/apex Alumni association for the University and this may be soon formed since this is a strong link for outside world through the university's own products.

The University has given representation to the students in the academic council, senate and also syndicate. This is a healthy trend. The students have access to the highest academic policy making bodies and hence they can directly represent the matters of concern to the authorities.

The University has a well-established students Union and the elected body is said to be performing constructively in the growth of the University.

Department of Physical education is one of the oldest in this country and the activities have been well organized to develop and nurture talented sports men and women of quality and the university can be proud of this achievement.

Criterion 6: Organization and Management

The university administration is organized in a hierarchical framework with Vice chancellor, Pro ViceChancellor and Registrar, controller of Examinations and Finance officer at the apex. The administrative set up of the university for both academic and administrative purposes follows the general scheme of any Indian Universities like

syndicate, senate, academic council, Faculties, Boards of studies, student councils and finance committee. As any other system there is a long chain of administrative controls and one has to see how the chain functions efficiently and effectively in time. The department councils seem to function effectively to organize the normal activities of each of the departments. This is a good system since the chain length is considerably reduced and action oriented efforts can be taken.

The university takes special care to ensure that any major academic reform is supported firmly by adequate administrative measures. The timely steps taken by the university in organizing a separate administrative section in the campus for monitoring and coordinating CSS programme was one of the principal factors contributing to the success of this academic reform. Similarly the administrative action taken as a follow up of the approval of regulations of the PG semesterisation in colleges, organizing workshops for college teachers, monitoring of the programmes by a university level committee, computerization of the work relating to this, helped in the introduction of this major academic reform in colleges.

The academic programmes for the university and affiliated colleges are prepared and monitored by the CSS divisions and the university level monitoring committee and this is a good working procedure.

Admission to the Ph D programme is fully transparent and acceptable, but how the admissions are done for other courses and especially for affiliated colleges and how transparent the system is not clear yet.

The university has about 1850 supporting and administrative staff and the staff ratio to teacher appear to be very high more than 7:1 and this can be partially due to the higher number of affiliated colleges.

However, administrative reforms are the urgent needs of the University. Planning board should be constituted.



The computerization of the activities of the university functions have been carried out in a systematic manner and it is good that the university has responded positively and also at the appropriate time for this change.

The university has a number of good and on going welfare schemes for students, staff and faculty and they have established good grievance redressal mechanism in the university. It is really commendable particularly that there prevails a high level of harmony in the University and almost all the segments seem to be satisfied with the grievance redressal mechanism.

Examination is an essential component of any university and it is a mammoth exercise for affiliated universities. The conduct of examination, the timely announcement of results and also addressing the complaints are activities requiring high level of efficiency and accuracy and the university fulfills these obligations effectively.

Finances of a university is always a problem since they have to raise the required grants in various forms and from various agencies and maintain a high level of expenditure control so that the essential activities of the university do not suffer for want of funds. The financial burden of the University has assumed many dimensions due to increased cost of conducting examinations, pension liability and hence the receipts and expenditure have to be carefully monitored and expanded. The administrative system may be modernized to further effectively facilitate the implementation of the academic programmes.

The conventional budgeting and auditing procedure are followed and the system appears to work well.

The university has devised to increase its resources in a number of ways like distance education programme, promoting industry-university interaction through consultancy (though it can be improved considerably), and Department Development Fund an innovative idea for fund raising at the non-centralized manner. All these efforts seem to bear fruits to the university.



Criterion 7: Healthy Practices

Being the oldest university in the state it had to set up healthy and sound practices which could be adopted by other educational institutions in the state. The practices are essentially to ensure decentralized decision making, transparency, dispensing of quality services, maintenance of standards of teaching and research, regularity of conduct of examinations and publication of results, confidentiality of examination, rigor and fairness of evaluation, and optimum utilization of infrastructure and resources. Several innovative and unique practices have been developed that adds to the academic ambience. These include:

1. Mechanism of internal quality check and monitoring
2. Standard and conventional procedure for budgeting and auditing
3. IT enabled services and programmes
4. Complementary academic programmes including private registration, career oriented vocational courses short term skill oriented programmes.
5. Meeting of the institutional goals and missions and setting them at high levels
6. Educational reforms
7. Value orientation
8. vision statement
9. establishing linkages and strengthening existing linkages
10. formulating industry and academia interaction
11. Ensuring academic freedom
12. Formulating reward and promotional facilities
13. Establishing a workable public interface and nurturing them suitably so that maximum benefits can be derived.
14. Establishing sound procedures for student recruitment and enrollment

In all these 14 heads the University of Kerala has been devoting attention though some of them may require some evaluation strengthening and also alterations. On the whole the University appears to have established healthy and sound practices.

Section 3: Overall Analysis

The peer team suggests the following measures to the university and government authorities to sustain its past glory and eminent status.



1. This being the oldest University in the state, it had necessarily to formulate and practice sound healthy procedures and traditions and the university is on its way to fulfilling this obligation.
2. Though the university has established various linkages and mechanism for the linkages, the operating of these MOUs and other societal connections need to be examined and evaluated. In view of the emerging globalization international linkages can be explored.
3. Industry academia collaboration is one aspect, which can be further strengthened
4. Research efforts can be more site and state specific and many departments can devote more efforts in research. The active percentage appears to be considerable.
5. The curriculum development introduction of credit system at the PG levels the semester pattern for even affiliated college PG programmes are noteworthy but similar efforts have to be placed on other UG programmes and other vocational programmes as well.
6. The utility and relevance of other diploma, certificate courses have to be evaluated.
7. It is also necessary the university carries out research on some frontier areas and some centres of excellence can be nurtured.
8. The university has formulated vision statement and appears to care for quality in its various functions. This is a tall order and has to be strived constantly.
9. Curriculum development and implementation are two essential aspects of any university and the conduct of examinations and announcement of results in correct time are the litmus test for any university. The University of Kerala can be given credit for these activities.
10. The university with diverse disciplines and multidisciplinary faculty it is ideally suited to create centres of excellence in emerging areas and the University should consider this aspect.
11. The university can also devise other methods of revenue generation especially in education marketing, consultancy services and other activities.
12. Medicinal and herbal garden activities can be explored.
13. The university on the basis of its strength with affiliated colleges and also its own press should also be in a position to generate educational kits, books, and other instructional material for market.



14. The high and unique cultural heritage manuscripts available in the University needs to be digitized.
15. The digital mapping of Kerala may be done by the University within the framework of their academic programmes.

The university on the whole, is in a stage ^{good} ~~of take off~~ ^{B. Viswan} with dynamism, and innovation the University can attain a unique status in the country.

The peer team deeply acknowledges the cooperation and support extended to it by the university authorities.

K. Kamal
(Prof. K.L. Kamal)
 Chairperson

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 Member

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 Member

B.L. Barnes
(Prof. B.L. Barnes)
 Member

R. Karpaga Kumaravel
(Dr. R. Karpaga Kumaravel)
 Member

Accept 15 refer with all 15 exhibit

B. Elbal
(Dr. B. Elbal)
 Vice-Chancellor
 University of Kerala



Date : March 13, 2003
 Place : Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala



राष्ट्रीय मूल्यांकन एवं प्रत्यायन परिषद्
विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग का स्वायत्त संस्थान
NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
An Autonomous Institution of the University Grants Commission

Certificate of Accreditation

*The Executive Committee of the
National Assessment and Accreditation Council
on the recommendation of the duly appointed
Peer Team is pleased to declare the*

*University of Kerala
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala as*

*Accredited¹
at the B⁺⁺ level².
(among the Universities)*

Date : March 21, 2003



*U. Srinivas
Director
EC-27-124*

1. This certification is valid for a period of *Five* years with effect from the academic year 2002 - 2003.
2. An institutional score (%) in the range of 55-60 denotes C grade, 60-65 - C* grade, 65-70 - C** grade, 70-75 - B grade, 75-80 - B* grade, 80-85 - B** grade, 85-90 - A grade, 90-95 - A* grade, 95-100 - A** grade (upper limits exclusive).