16 Steps, the University Grants Commission has undertaken to establish a quality process driven transparent state higher education in Sri Lanka

Period: from 9th March 2015 to 31st Dec 2016

1) Expansion of access to free state higher education

  i Total increase of student numbers during the period - **5564**
   - Technology - 2030
   - Medicine - 70
   - Science – 575
   - Engineering - 208
   - Agriculture - 45
   - Architecture/Design/Town & Country Planning – 20
   - Paramedical - 170
   - Management and Commerce - 590
   - Humanities and Social Sciences – 1816
   - Siddha Medicine – 40

  ii New Faculties, Departments and Degree Programmes

   Approved New Faculties – 12:
   - Faculty of Engineering, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
   - Faculty of Computing and Technology – University of Kelaniya
   - Faculty of Technology – Universities of Sri Jayewardenepura, Jaffna, Ruhuna, Colombo, South Eastern and Eastern
   - Faculty of Nursing - University of Colombo
   - Faculty of Medicine – Wayamba University
   - Faculty of Business - University of Moratuwa
   - Faculty of Graduate Studies - Sabaragamuwa University

Approved New Departments – 61:

- University of Colombo (11), University of Peradeniya(1), University of Sri Jayewardenepura(9), University of Kelaniya (4), University of Moratuwa(4), University of Jaffna(3), University of Ruhuna(5), Eastern University, Sri Lanka (3), South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (3), Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (18).

New Degree Programmes approved– Undergraduate- 30, Postgraduate- 17

- University of Colombo (UG-3, PG-4),
- University of Peradeniya(PG-3),
- University of Sri Jayewardenepura(UG-4, PG-2),
- University of Kelaniya(UG-3, PG-4),
- University of Jaffna(UG-4),
- University of Moratuwa(UG-1, PG-1),
- University of Ruhuna(UG-3, PG-1),
- Eastern University, Sri Lanka (UG-1),
- South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (UG-2),
- Rajarata University of Sri Lanka (UG-3),
- Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (UG-3),
- Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (UG-1, PG-2),
- Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka (UG- 2)

2) **Simplifying and modernizing the admission process**

i   Introduced a new student-friendly admission hand book.

ii Introduced a unique Identification Code, UNI CODE to regularize the admission system.

3) **Strengthening the governance, transparency and accountability of the institutional processes**

i   Created a mechanism to register all selected students to universities on a fixed date with the UGC.

ii   Introduced a new system which gives students not only an opportunity to indicate their choice of Course of Study but also the university where they want to pursue their Course of Study. In the past, students who are eligible for university admission were given only the option of indicating their preferred Course of Study.

iii   Introduced an Online Application system and On-Line Registration system.

4) Reduction of the time interval between release of GCE Advanced Level (A/L) exam results and admission of students to state universities

i   Increased the capacity of the University Grants Commission by
- Expanding the admission department with extra space and introducing a security system
- Expanding human resources capacity at the admission department by selecting IT personnel from a competitive examination and a structured interview process

ii   Introduced an on-line application and on-line registration system to speed up the process, prompt identification of fraudulent information and eliminate loop holes in the manual selection process.

iii   Introduced a performance based payment system to the Island wide ICT, NAC and Nanasala Centres, for providing their services to students to submit the on-line applications free of charge for university admission.

iv   Reached an agreement with university authorities (Vice Chancellors and Deans) to commence academic programmes in all state universities on the 1st of October each year, commencing from 2017.

v   Enhanced the coordination between Ministry of Education, university academia and University Grants Commission for re-scrutiny of A/L Question papers to speed up the process.

vi   Created internal mechanisms to speed up the release of 'Cut Off ' marks at the University Grants Commission and early commencement of several rounds of 'Filling of Vacancies' to release the final list of registered students for universities to facilitate early commencement of student enrolments and academic activity.

5) **Enhancing the relevancy of university education to the job market; to address the issue of Skills Mis-Match**

   i   Introduced several **new** nationally and regionally relevant degree programmes:
- 25 New Technology programmes in Engineering Technology, Bio Systems Technology and Information Communication Technology
- 7 New Technology Faculties in University of Colombo, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Kelaniya, University of Ruhuna, University of Jaffna, Eastern University, Sri Lanka and South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
- Initiated the establishment of a New Medical Faculty in Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

   ii   Initiated processes to **diversify** the Existing Humanities and Social Science Degree Programmes by introducing Basic Mathematics, Statistics, IT and English with compulsory Credits, to enhance their skills and competencies without curtailing the number of students admitted for Humanities and Social Sciences.

6) **Strengthening the Quality and Capacity of the University Academia**

   i   Introduced a Performance Based Incentive Payment System for High Quality Research by University Academia.

   ii   Increased funding from UGC for university academics to obtain postgraduate qualifications and to establish and promote Split PhDs with foreign countries. The total number of grants awarded is 188 amounting to Rs. Mn. 342.

   iii   Created mechanisms to obtain Full/Partial scholarships for PhDs for university teachers in Germany, Japan and Australia.

   iv   Linked universities with international donors (South Korea, China) for development of Postgraduate Research Laboratories in Universities.

7) **Strengthening and regularizing the Quality Assurance Processes in State and Non State University system**

   i   Established a Quality Assurance Directorate within University Grants Commission for state university system.

ii   Established Bench Marks and standardized processes when seeking approval for new degree programmes to enhance the quality of academic programmes offered by the state universities.

iii   Enhanced the 'Quality Assurance Cells' in all State Universities.

iv   Established supervisory system with a time line for assessment of quality assurance in state universities.

v   Identified the frame work level for each degree programme with new Sri Lanka Qualifications Frame Work (SLQF) for State University System.

vi   Proposed and initiated a process, with the concurrence of the Ministry of Higher Education and Highways for creation of a new independent Quality Assurance and Accreditation Mechanism for **State and Non State Higher Education Systems in Sri Lanka**

8) **Enhancing the University –Industry Links**

i   Created a new system to enhance University - Business Linkages by issuing a new UGC Circular, authorizing the establishment of University- Business Cells with the support of GIZ Programme.

ii   Invited representatives of the Employers Federation of Sri Lanka, and to invite for representations from Ceylon Chambers of Commerce and National Chamber of Commerce to UGC Standing Committee on Humanities and Social Sciences, to support the development of sustainable processes for Capacity Building of graduates of Humanities and Social Sciences.

9) **Created English Language Teaching Departments (ELTDs) in Sri Lankan Universities to enhance speaking, writing and communication ability of graduates and to empower and support capacity building of English language teachers**

10) **Funded to create an on-line English and IT Learning Module accessible to all selected students prior to enrolment to universities, with a facility to obtain a certificate of successful completion of the module on line**

11) **Addressing issues on Gender Equity and Equality, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Ragging in Universities**

    i   Created awareness on gender issues, gender based violence and menace of ragging in Sri Lankan universities by using electronic and print media and organizing symposia/workshops.

    ii Established a New Standing Committee named 'Gender Equity and Equity Standing Committee' in UGC.

    iii Established a New Gender Equity and Equity Center in the UGC with a Director to address issues on gender, gender based violence and ragging.

    iv Initiated a mechanism for anonymous online Complaints for university students.

    v Introduced an Affidavit in the new University Hand Book, to be signed by the students and parents at the time of registration of students for 2016/2017 intake, as confirmatory evidence of their awareness of the consequence of violence and ragging in universities as per Ragging Act 1998.

12) **Creating a closer dialog with Student Unions, Academic Staff Unions and Non Academic Trade Unions with concurrence of Ministry of Higher Education and Highways**

13) **Decentralizing the Meetings of the University Grants Commission**

The Commission decided to have 4 meetings per year in peripherally placed universities for members of the Commission to meet the academics and council members. The first UGC meeting was held in the University of Jaffna on 22nd July 2016.

14) **Infrastructure developments in Universities**

    i   Completed Projects

- Hostels – 73 (Rs. 12,943 Mn)
- Academic buildings -148 (Rs. 4,406 Mn)
- Student recreation facility - 43 (Rs. 254 Mn)
- Administrative buildings - 9 (Rs. 282 Mn)

- Staff Quarters – 55 (Rs. 306 Mn)

ii Ongoing Projects
   - Hostels – 34 (Rs. 6,559 Mn)
   - Academic buildings -113 (Rs. 29,164 Mn)
   - Student recreation facility - 29 (Rs. 3,026 Mn)
   - Administrative buildings - 5 (Rs. 667 Mn)
   - Staff Quarters – 11 (Rs. 655 Mn)

15. Increase in Mahapola and student Bursaries

University Grants Commission with Ministry of Higher Education and Highways implemented the decision of the Government to increase the Mahapola Scholarships from Rs.2500 to 5000 and student Bursaries from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 4000.

16. Interest free loan scheme to university students

University Grants Commission assisted the Ministry of Higher Education and Highways to implement the decision by the Government to provide Interest free loans to purchase laptops.

University Grants Commission
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