

## **Assessing Perceptions of Quality among Students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in the Open University of Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

The definitions of quality in relation to study programmes in higher education can lead to diverse conceptions based on context and on whose perceptions are being explored. Most studies on the subject focus on conceptions of quality of academics and senior managers in universities and other government bodies. How quality in higher education programmes is conceptualised by students is now becoming increasingly important as students are one of the most important stake holder groups. However there has not been much empirical research done into students’ conceptions of quality in higher education in Sri Lanka. This research aims to address some of these concerns by looking at student perceptions of ‘quality’ at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in the OUSL. The undergraduate programmes in the Faculty of HSS at the OUSL have been recently evaluated by the UGC, based on a set of predetermined criteria formulated for assessing quality of undergraduate programmes of state universities in Sri Lanka. The views of students have been explored to some extent in relation to these predetermined categories in the site visits that were conducted for the review process. This research aims to conduct an in-depth and systematic investigation of students’ perceptions of quality. A qualitative research will be conducted which consists of of focus group discussions (FGDs) to be conducted with students of HSS from three undergraduate degree programmes offered by the faculty. The FGDs will be recorded and transcribed for qualitative analysis to identify themes and categories of quality. It is expected that this research will help to identify further categories in relation to the nature of quality which can inform programme delivery and development.

Key words: Quality assurance, student perceptions, qualitative research