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A survey of the causes responsible for absenteeism of
undergraduates in English language classes and proposals
for remedial measures.

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Abstract

The English Language Service Course was introduced to the universities of Sri Lanka in 1960 s because of the low level of English of the students entering the universities during that period . The main objective of the Service Course then was enabling students to read reference material. Therefore , the focus naturally fell on reading. However, with the passage of time objectives were broadened and today ELTUs address other skill areas of the language too. Yet, students do not seem to make use of ELTU classes sufficiently. They very often get absent from classes. The problem of absenteeism is a common problem in almost all the universities although some universities are reluctant to admit it. The problem is acute at the University of Kelaniya. Being a university where English is an optional examination unit absenteeism is often attributed to that fact at the University of Kelaniya. Yet it has not been proved empirically. This research was undertaken to find out the causes of absenteeism. Identifying the real language requirements of students through a Needs Analysis was also another objective of the research. Chapter 1 of this thesis gives a general background of language teaching at the universities. Chapter 2 discusses the parameters of absenteeism, the significance of the study, and the methodology adopted in this survey . Chapter 3 gives a description of the tools of assessment used for this research and the details of both the participants and the ELTU course. Chapter 4 analyses the needs, the deficiencies and the training priorities of the students. Chapter 5 summarises the main points of chapter 4 and presents facts and trends observed during the course of the research.