



**THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Progress Report on
the Quality Assurance Council (QAC)
Quality Audit of HKUST
in November 2010**

May 2012

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1. Introduction

In the period since receiving the Report on the QAC's Quality Audit in November 2010, the University has been engaged in four main projects relating to teaching and learning:

- i. Implementation of an integrated process for **strategic planning and University budgets** more firmly grounded in key performance metrics and benchmarks.
- ii. The development of a **curriculum for the four-year degree** and a substantially revised three-year degree to be launched in September 2012, with related work to: revise quality assurance arrangements for the design and approval of undergraduate programs; implement a holistic and outcomes-oriented undergraduate student experience; and create an enhanced infrastructure for student advising and mentoring.
- iii. Increasing the priority of the faculty role in students' education, in particular through the implementation of a scheme for **faculty compensation review** that gives appropriate priority to contributions to teaching and learning, and through the establishment of **teaching and learning units** in the Schools coordinating their work through the Center for Enhanced Learning and Teaching (CELT).
- iv. Setting up programs for research postgraduate students that provide opportunities for an education geared toward broader learning outcomes.

These projects and the general advance of the University's educational programs have been greatly assisted by the input of the QAC Panel and the specific recommendations of the Report.

The account presented below of progress in the University's arrangements for quality assurance and the enhancement of educational programs follows the outline of the QAC Report, with specific reference to the Panel's commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

2. Articulation of Appropriate Objectives

In this Focus Area, the Panel commended HKUST's *succinct and appropriate statement* of graduate attributes – ABC LIVE, and the effort to make these attributes a foundation for the four-year degree (**Commendation 1**).

In the period since the visit of the Panel, the work to embed the agreed attributes has continued, both through the design of academic programs and through the development of out-of-class learning opportunities. All majors under the four-year degree have developed agreed program learning outcomes and all courses taught in the four-year degree are required to present intended learning outcomes for the course, linked to program outcomes. Useful software has been deployed to facilitate this effort and to track progress.

Appendix 1 provides the approved guideline for curriculum design of undergraduate degrees, including the development of outcomes statements.

3. Management Planning and Accountability

The QAC Panel expressed concern that the University's extensive delegation of authority to Schools could hinder its overall capacity to meet new challenges, but noted that achieving better integration was among the President's priorities. This project of integration has emerged as the effort to build *I-HKUST* as a major theme in the strategic vision of the University.

Strategic planning, budgets and operations

The Panel affirmed its support for the University as it redevelops its strategic planning operation and incorporates measurable indicators and a process for review of progress against plan. The Panel specifically supported the appointment of the Director of Planning and Institutional Research to carry this effort forward (**Affirmations 1 and 2**).

One of the initial functions of the Office of Planning and Institutional Research (OPIR) was the coordination/development of the University's *Strategic Plan (2011-16)*, built on the University's 15-year strategic vision. The Plan sets out objectives and initiatives in key areas and defines institutional priorities to align the work of units of

the University. In developing the Plan, extensive consultation was carried out with faculty, staff and students, under the guidance and with the participation of the Council and Court (see <http://strategicplan.ust.hk/eng/foreword.html>).

To enhance planning and help realize strategic objectives, the University rolled out an integrated planning cycle starting in 2010-11. The key planning activities include: strategic planning, budget planning, annual operation planning (AOP), and reporting. As part of the AOP, the University identifies specific actions against initiatives of the Strategic Plan with corresponding metrics and targets to monitor performance.

This structured process streamlines planning efforts, increases accountability, and allows for regular management review and monitoring of progress, including mid- and year-end reporting to Council.

Appendix 2 sets out the timeline for this process for 2011-12.

Benchmarking

The Panel expressed concern about a lack of evidence that HKUST had an *institutional strategy for benchmarking aimed at enhancing performance* (**Recommendation 1**). The University has considered this recommendation with a focus on three areas:

- Local and international comparisons based on agreed indicators of performance
- Enhancement of the work of external School advisory committees and their role in each School's system of quality assurance
- Specific incorporation of benchmarking into the strategic planning exercise for Schools

Local and international comparisons

OPIR has built up its institutional research capability to regularly produce a comprehensive Performance Metrics Report encompassing a wide range of metrics across all key business areas, including teaching and research. Internal as well as external sources of data from local and regional institutions are used for trend and benchmarking analysis. The Report is disseminated to Deans and senior management, as well as the Council.

In addition to quantitative benchmarking, the University is also engaged in qualitative benchmarking to exchange information with other global institutions and learn from best practices.

In view of the lack of a platform in Asia for university planners to benchmark and share practice, the University initiated and organized the inaugural Higher Education Planning in Asia Forum (<http://hepa.ust.hk>) in March 2012. The Forum attracted over 30 university planners across Asia, with a group of senior delegates from the UK joining in part of the program. By setting up this Asian network, the University aims to strengthen benchmarking and planning capabilities amongst participating universities.

School external advisory committees

For academic programs, external advisory committees appointed by the four Schools have been the main vehicles for benchmarking. These committees include academic peers from internationally recognized universities, tasked to provide expert input on the scholarly and educational direction of the School.

At this stage in the University's development, and in the light of the QAC recommendation, a broad review of these external advisory committees is underway to consider the role, scope and set-up of advisory committees, including:

- Clarification of mandate – given the special concern with the benchmarking of academic standards and provision
- Appropriate extension of the scope of review and reports
- Complementary arrangements for external input, as needed

There is also a commitment to increasing the impact of advisory committees through:

- Enhanced preparation for review, as an opportunity for internal review, agenda setting and discussion of priorities
- Better use of visits and associated deadlines, as an opportunity to rethink issues from the viewpoint of *critical friends*
- Increased attention to closing the loop to ensure that committee comments and recommendations have an impact

This review is linked to a broader effort to review quality assurance arrangements.

Benchmarking for School strategic planning

In recent annual strategy-budget exercises, each School has been asked to include benchmarking information as a guide to the School's longer-term plans and aspirations. This has been helpful and consideration is being given to making benchmarking a more systematic component of the process.

Dissemination of good practice

The final issue raised under this Focus Area was the dissemination of good practice. In this regard, the Panel affirmed the leading role of the Committee on Teaching and Learning Quality (CTLQ) in this effort (**Affirmation 3**). The following specific steps have been taken to follow up on the Panel's concern:

- Annual reports on teaching and learning presented to the Senate through CTLQ include a section on good practice. Greater efforts are being made to share these valuable reports across the University.
- A plan to communicate the results of teaching enhancement projects is a requirement for funding under a Teaching Development Grant (TDG). This feature of the TDG exercise has been reinforced.
- A key function of the OBE Steering Group has been to share good practice by Schools and departments in the development of an outcomes orientation. Reports of the Steering Group through CTLQ will continue to emphasize this sharing.

4. Program Development, Curriculum Design and Approval Process

The Panel was generally supportive of the University's plans for the four-year degree and specifically affirmed the priority being given to interdisciplinary education and to inquiry-based learning (**Affirmation 4**). In this regard, considerable progress has been made since the Panel visit.

Interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary options for students have been designed into the four-year degree in several ways:

- Intake to Schools, with School-level foundations enabling students to delay their choice of specialization and to study across a broader range of fields
- Greater opportunities to enroll in minors
- Opportunities for academically strong students to study for two majors, or dual degrees

- Interdisciplinary major programs under the Interdisciplinary Programs Office, with additional majors in the pipeline

Undergraduate research has also had a high priority. The core of this effort is the very successful Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). This scheme has been extended and developed. In 2010-11, 100 faculty members and 250 students participated in UROP projects, continuing a trend of steady increase. HKUST has signed an undergraduate research exchange agreement with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under which each institution will send up to five students to engage in research projects supervised by professors of the other institution.

The Panel confirmed that the **program approval process** at HKUST is robust, and supported the University's intention to adopt program-approval and course-approval documentation that builds in program and course learning outcomes (**Affirmation 5**). This documentation has now been completed (see Appendix 1).

Under this Focus Area the Panel also affirmed support for the University's commitment to the improvement of **English language competence** (**Affirmation 6**), and noted the need for enhancement of opportunities to achieve Chinese language proficiency. Important advances have been made in this area of our work, including the complete revamp of the English-language program for undergraduate students, which will comprise 12 credits for four-year degree students; a required course in Chinese Communications under the University Common Core; and a substantial extension of the English-language program for research students.

5. Student Learning Environment

The Panel welcomed the *strong sense of community among and between staff and students* (**Commendation 2**) and specifically noted the piloting of Living Learning Communities (LLCs) in residential halls. This project has made considerable progress, with the completion of successful pilots and the establishment of a sustainable model for LLCs and for their gradual extension to all Halls, as student support for LLCs grows.

Other projects to enhance campus life and student engagement are also ongoing, including the redesign of departmental spaces – to be piloted in the new academic building – to encourage increased student-student and staff-student engagement. The

Learning Commons – a learning space under the management of the Library, designed to enable group work and interaction – has opened.

Student advising and mentoring

The Panel commended the University for the *effectiveness of the system of student advising and mentoring (Commendation 3)*. Given the intention to admit students to Schools and the greater flexibility of the four-year degree curriculum, it has been recognized that the existing system, based in academic departments, will need to be enhanced to include a School-level dimension. Each School has formed a unit specifically for advising and mentoring and more faculty and student mentors have been drawn into this work. These units will benefit from the creation of School front-offices on the main University concourse, with meeting rooms and lounge areas for informal interaction. The increased scope for academic advising creates a need for student mentors and faculty to receive an introduction to this role. CELT is coordinating and supporting this effort.

Coordination of support for student learning

The Panel expressed a concern about coordination of the wide range of the University's activities to support student learning and student life and welcomed the appointment of a Dean of Undergraduate Education (now renamed Dean of Students) to ensure that the student experience is developmental and holistic (**Affirmation 7**). Since the Panel's visit, good progress has been made in conceptualizing and implementing a coherent approach to the delivery of programs, beginning with an emphasis on year-one success.

In each of the key program areas – service learning, internships and placement, international experiences, etc. – the proactive partnership of Schools and Student Affairs has been stressed, with this partnership benefiting from the consolidation of the role of the Dean of Students and the formation of the School units for academic advising, which can support the promotion and management of the co-curriculum.

At this stage, the challenge is presenting to students a more systematic framework for their engagement with out-of-class activities – a framework that takes into account differences in student goals and the range of opportunities available to meet these goals. As the Panel noted, an important component of the effort to meet this challenge is the linkage of out-of-class learning opportunities with the desired graduate

attributes defined by ABC LIVE (**Affirmation 9**). Under the four-year degree, delayed choice of major will provide a valuable opportunity to work with students toward the end of year one to review their progress and consider their next steps. ABC LIVE will continue to provide a useful template for these discussions as students make choices and set priorities for their engagement with academic and non-academic activities.

Student feedback

The Panel was concerned at the lack of evidence of the systematic use of student feedback or of systematic attempts to inform students of the impact of their feedback and recommended that the University consider ways to better inform students of the results of their input (**Recommendation 2**).

In the light of this recommendation, the University has made a thorough review of international good practice. This review suggested that no single institutional change can fully address this concern. Universities always find it a challenge to maintain effective communication with their members, especially students, who have many points of contact with the institution (see Appendix 3).

The strategy being adopted is therefore to communicate the high value of closing the loop with students, but to allow different approaches for academic units, central student services (Library, IT services, etc.), CELT's questionnaire feedback, and student developmental programs.

To ensure that progress is being made, CTLQ now requires that annual reports on teaching and learning quality from Schools and academic-support units report specifically on feedback to students following up on their suggestions for improvement.

E-learning

The Panel recommended that the University take a strategic view of its investment in e-learning technologies (**Recommendation 3**). At the time of the Panel visit, a Task Group convened by University Librarian was already engaged in this effort. Its final report was presented to the Provost in late 2010. Following up on this report, the University has charged the Director of CELT with drawing up a strategy and a call for resources. This strategy is framed by a recognition that the University's e-learning

efforts are not intended to support distance learning but to enhance face-to-face learning. The four pillars of this strategy are therefore:

- Student and staff capacity building and engagement, including online courseware, information and media-literacy modules, and desk-top access for professional development
- Access to and availability of digital learning resources, including: ebooks and ereaders, digital course packs, and the extension of HKUST iTunesU
- Provision of media-rich learning spaces, including: the Learning Commons, and enhanced set-ups in the new academic building
- Infrastructure and system enhancement, including remote lecture capture, next generation personal response system clickers, and exploitation of the virtual desktop

An overview of the University's e-learning strategy is provided in Appendix 4.

6. Experiential and Other Out-of-Class Learning

Internships

The Panel affirmed its support for HKUST's effort to extend opportunities for internships (**Affirmation 8**). Since the Panel's visit, internship programs have continued to grow and further develop.

Opportunities for internships and work-related learning experiences are provided through the Schools, departments and the Career Center of the Student Affairs Office (<https://career.ust.hk/internships.html>).

International exchange

HKUST has worked hard to build up an extensive and well managed program for student international exchange, receiving a commendation from the Panel for this effort (**Commendation 4**). We are making steady progress toward achieving a target of 50% of students able to benefit from international exchange by 2015. The University's international exchange program is part of a broader effort to internationalize campus life and to maximize the impact of internationalization on the student experience – a challenging goal for both undergraduate and postgraduate education at HKUST.

7. Program Monitoring and Review

Annual reports

The Panel appreciated that the principal mechanism for program monitoring and review at HKUST is the requirement for annual reports to CTLQ on teaching and learning from both academic and academic-support units. At the time of the Panel's visit, the annual reporting exercise had completed two cycles. The Panel provided specific suggestions and recommended that annual reporting requirements be streamlined, with a greater emphasis on common data sets and more critical reflection leading to action plans with accountabilities and timeframes (**Recommendation 4**).

Arrangements for annual reports fall under CTLQ, which has carefully considered the Panel's suggestions. As a result, the report format has been substantially adjusted to emphasize the necessity to respond to student feedback data and the other information provided to units and to focus reports on key elements of concern (see Appendix 5).

As the Panel recognized, the guidelines and templates mandated by CTLQ already called for reports to be focused on evidence, reflective and oriented to action plans. The challenge is to develop a culture that encourages reporting units to make these features a normal part of their practice.

CTLQ has continued to emphasize that the annual reporting exercise is of value only if it is forward looking and improvement oriented, and has welcomed significant improvement in the latest reporting rounds.

External review and advice

The Panel expressed concern that there are no University-wide arrangements for external review and recommended that HKUST introduce a system of periodic reviews of all taught programs (**Recommendation 5**).

The University is following up on this recommendation, which echoed elements of the University's own action plans presented in the QAC Audit Submission. In undertaking this follow-up, the context for external review is being taken into account, including:

- The movement away from well-defined undergraduate programs and the broadening of intended learning outcomes for undergraduates as the four-year degree is implemented.
- The changing focus and process of professional accreditation exercises in both engineering and business. In this regard the Panel's view that these accreditation exercises are concerned with only *minimum acceptable standards* is not well grounded.
- Existing arrangements for external peer review, including the work of the School external advisory committees.

Given this context, the key elements in the University's plan for external review currently are:

- i. Embedding existing accreditation exercises and the work of School advisory bodies within a **University-mandated structure** that sets out the University's requirements for external review, including scope, reporting, action plans and follow-up, and timelines.
- ii. Where educational programs are not subject to accreditation, maintaining a **system of external advisors** that conforms to the University mandate for review.
- iii. Consolidating and enhancing the work of School **external advisory committees**.
- iv. Establishing an external Advisory Board for the University's extensive **four-year degree Common Core**.

These initiatives are regarded not as separate elements, but as contributing to the establishment of a systematic process for review of academic programs.

Taught postgraduate programs are typically part time and self-funded and vary greatly in their educational goals. This raises special issues for program monitoring and review. The University has therefore created a separate Task Force on Educational Quality and Learning Outcomes of Taught Postgraduate Programs to review its taught postgraduate education and arrangements for accountability and quality assurance. The Task Force is expected to complete its work in the Fall of 2012.

8. Assessment

The Panel recommended that the University develop an assessment policy based on international best practice. Particular reference was made to the timing and scale of assessment tasks and feedback to students relative to intended learning outcomes (**Recommendation 6**).

To follow up on this recommendation, the CTLQ secretariat undertook a broad scan of international good practice (see Appendix 6).

A document approved by the University in November 2009, titled *Assessment of Students: Course Grading, Guidelines and Good Practice*, has provided a basis for follow-up on this recommendation. As a result of the scan, amendments to this document will be made through the Senate.

As the framing of this recommendation suggests, policy for student assessment is strongly linked to the challenge of assessing students' success in achieving learning outcomes. Coordinated by the University's OBE Steering Group, each School is undertaking pilot projects appropriate to its circumstances. The Library (information literacy) and the Language Center (communications) have also engaged with the Steering Group to round out this exercise.

Aligning assessment with learning outcomes and gaining wash-back effects of this effort on student learning is a priority of the University. These pilot projects are designed to guide longer-term changes in the University's assessment practice. This broad effort will be reviewed in the Fall of 2012.

Recommendation 7 of the QAC Audit Report is that "the Committee on Undergraduate Studies takes a stronger role in monitoring the distribution of grades and awards that fall outside HKUST's guidelines on percentage bands". The University found some difficulty in dealing with this recommendation because it has made a determined effort to move away from norm-referencing of student grades to grading in line with students learning achievements, a policy which has made an important contribution to the implementation of an outcomes-based education. Although grades are not norm referenced, the University seeks to assure itself that academic standards are being maintained through three main mechanisms:

- i. The University's grading policy sets out explicit descriptors for each grade across four domains: understanding and demonstrating subject knowledge; applying concepts and knowledge; demonstration of higher cognitive skills; and ability to learn. Only students who achieve the set standard are eligible for the grade.
- ii. Actual grading distribution are routinely monitored and reported both to the Committee on Undergraduate Studies and the University Senate. Where distributions are out-of-line with historical experience, this is noted and units may be asked to explain the deviation.
- iii. Student grades are subject to external reviews. The University routinely compares the grading experience for students on out-exchange (about one third of all students) relative to their HKUST grades, and each School has in place a process for review of students' achievement, either as part of external accreditation, or through External Academic Advisors.

Now that the first phase in the effort to move toward an outcome-oriented assessment practice has been completed, with broad acceptance of the policy by faculty and students, the University is engaged in a review of grading practice, including a review of the available data and consultation on the grading descriptors. This was discussed at a recent Senate meeting, and we look forward to reporting progress as part of the next round of quality audit.

9. Teaching Quality and Staff Development

HKUST has established a full spread of arrangements for the induction of new staff, both informally through their departments and more formally through CELT programs. The effectiveness of this induction process was commended by the QAC Panel (**Commendation 5**). This commendation was complemented by praise for programs undertaken to introduce teaching assistants to their role (**Commendation 6**). As noted below, analogous programs for research students and early-career faculty have been substantially enhanced.

School-level units for faculty development

An important initiative has been the establishment at School level of units with a mission to advance educational work for their discipline. The School of Engineering

formed the Center for Engineering Education Innovation, under the leadership of the late Professor Edmond Ko, as a vehicle for faculty development, see: <http://www.seng.ust.hk/e2i/index.html>, and the School of Business and Management has formed the Business Education Center to promote to support the educational mission of the School, see: <http://www.bm.ust.hk/sbmlearn/eng/home.php>.

Evaluation of faculty performance

The Panel accepted that HKUST *takes teaching performance seriously in substantiation and promotion* decisions but expressed concern about inconsistency in the use of various sources of evidence in evaluating teaching performance (**Recommendation 8**). This recommendation is aligned with the action plan presented in the University's submission to the QAC. Since the Panel's visit, good progress has been made in developing a model for personnel decisions that:

- Identifies the full scope of faculty work in teaching and learning and expectations for performance
- Sets out the types of evidence that a committee would expect to review when faculty make their case for substantiation and promotion

A report has been presented to a meeting of the Deans and proposals have been referred for detailed review to a task force of senior faculty directly involved in personnel decisions.

This effort is linked to the introduction of broader criteria for faculty performance, including criteria relating to the educational mission, linked to a review of faculty compensation.

10. Research Degrees

HKUST was particularly pleased that the QAC Panel commended its arrangements for the quality assurance of research degrees and the breadth of its support for research students (**Commendation 7**). Since the Panel's visit, further progress has been made in developing programs for research students that provide opportunities for a more holistic education geared toward broader learning outcomes.

The following are some of the key elements in this effort:

- The Graduate Teaching Assistant development program has been extended, in line with the UK's *Researcher Development Framework*, through a coordinated

effort with contributions from the Language Center, Student Affairs and the Library (see <http://celt.ust.hk/induction-trainings-support-programs-rpgs/professional-development-research-postgraduates-rpgs/>).

- A credit-bearing course for professional development of research postgraduate students has been implemented through a partnership of CELT and the Schools.
- Professional development for research students has been provided through a blended-learning and online, self-access format based on commercially available courseware – the *Research Skills Master* and *Research Integrity* programs.

The University has also made progress in the development and use of indicators of performance in research-student education, including data on students' publications, graduate destinations and an exit questionnaire on the experience at HKUST.

11. Further Progress in Quality Assurance

A document titled *The Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning at HKUST*, approved by the University Senate in 2007, provides a comprehensive statement of principles, roles and responsibilities for quality assurance. After five years of experience with these policies, a broad review of arrangements for quality assurance is timely and will be an opportunity to adjust systems to take into account important changes, including:

- The new structure for undergraduate education under the four-year degree, especially the greater flexibility in students' programs of study
- The increasing importance given to broader learning outcomes under ABC LIVE and the impact of this on learning activities and assessment
- Ongoing changes in the character and scope of external accreditation of programs in business and engineering
- Growth in the scale of taught postgraduate education

The review will also benefit from the proactive efforts to follow up on the input of the QAC Panel outlined above. It is intended that the review will be completed in by mid-2013, with implementation by the end of 2013.

Appendix 1:

Documents on Approval of Undergraduate Programs and Courses



THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Documents on Approval of Undergraduate Programs and Courses

*Prepared By
The Secretariat of the Committee on Undergraduate Studies
Office of the Provost*

*Extracted from The Four-Year Degree: Curriculum and Academic Regulations
Approved by the Senate in its 109th meeting on 6 December 2011*

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THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM AND COURSE ADMINISTRATION

Approval of Programs and Changes to Programs

*For the purposes of the approval process described below, undergraduate **programs** include: majors; minors; and other substantial, structured components of students' graduation requirements. Addition or deletion of an option will be approved as a change to the relevant major program.*

A. Approval of Programs

The basis for the approval of courses and programs is set out in the Senate document *Quality of Teaching and Learning at HKUST*, as follows:

Recommendations to Senate through Schools/IPO for approval of new programs/courses or changes to programs/courses should be:

- Consistent with the University's role and contribute to the development of the University's strategy for education and research
- Based on a clear articulation of intended learning outcomes and designed to align teaching, learning and student assessment with these intended learning outcomes
- Benchmarked against relevant international standards
- Based on evidence that changes proposed for courses, programs and other learning activities will improve educational quality and benefit students and potential students
- Broadly supported by faculty and staff associated with the program/course
- Consistent with the resources available to support student learning
- Consistent with Senate policies for approval of courses and programs and regulations for degrees
- Accompanied by explicit arrangements for the transition of students affected by changes

In making recommendations, Schools are additionally asked to ensure that proposals are documented and presented according to University policies.

The process for approval of a program by the Senate is intended to ensure that these requirements for approval are met. This process has three stages: an **initial proposal** considered by the Committee on Undergraduate Studies (CUS); submission to CUS of a **final proposal**; and **final approval** by the Senate.

i. Initial Proposal

The purpose of the initial proposal is to allow proposers to confirm support for the development of a detailed proposal for the curriculum and to allow members of CUS to raise issues and make suggestions that might strengthen a recommendation for approval.

Initial proposals must be submitted using a **prescribed form** which can be downloaded from the *Program and Course Administration* website at http://www.ust.hk/provost/ug/course_admin/appendices.html. (see Form 1)

The completed form provides basic information relating to the proposal, including: the provisional title of the program; the unit(s) responsible for delivery; and the expected effective date for the launch of the program.

The form must be signed by the Dean/Dean's designate/Director IPO. A signed form indicates that the relevant departments and Schools are supportive and that the necessary resources to deliver the program will be available.

Supporting documentation must be provided, dealing with the areas of concern indicated below. To simplify preparation and review of this material, the attached supporting documents should be identified in a **cover sheet** (available at http://www.ust.hk/provost/ug/course_admin/appendices.html). Supporting documents provided for an initial proposal will also be relevant when submitting the final proposal. For an initial proposal the following areas must be addressed:

- a. Educational objectives and alignment of objectives with role and mission
The objectives of the program in relation to the academic profile of the participating academic units, and how the program relates to the overall mission of the University
- b. Outline of the program structure and curriculum
For an initial proposal it is not necessary to provide a complete curriculum, but sufficient information should be provided to clarify the intended structure and coverage of the program

- c. Student demand and demand for graduates
Evidence of the extent of employment and academic opportunities available for graduates

Details of consultation and/or surveys to assess student demand and (for a major) the demand for graduates

The relation of this program to similar programs available at HKUST, and (for majors) to similar programs available at other local institutions and the attraction of the proposed program for students
- d. Arrangements for admission and selection (if relevant)
Requirements for entry, if any, and how students will be selected and admitted to the program
- e. Estimated student enrollment (for majors/minors)
Provide the expected range of enrollments for the major/minor and indicate if a cap on enrollment is to be imposed
- f. Consultation with stakeholders
Relevant feedback, comments or reports from external advisors, employers, alumni, servicing departments/Schools, and others
The proposal should indicate how these comments and feedback have been addressed
- g. Benchmarking
Evidence of how the curriculum, learning experience and academic standard of the proposed program relate to similar programs at equivalent institutions, demonstrating that the program will meet the necessary international standard
- h. Resources
Approval by CUS/Senate of a program does not guarantee that resources will be available to deliver the program. CUS relies on the assurance of Schools/IPO that the necessary resources will be available. If delivery of the program will require additional resources, this must be stated clearly together with a plan for implementation.

ii. Final Proposal

Documentation of the Final Proposal includes submission of: the prescribed form; curriculum requirements; sample student pathways; and supporting documentation.

The **prescribed form** also completed for the initial proposal can be downloaded from the *Program and Course Administration* website at

http://www.ust.hk/provost/ug/course_admin/appendices.html. (see Form 1)

Curriculum requirements must be submitted using the template provided at http://www.ust.hk/provost/ug/course_admin/appendices.html. Accurate and complete curriculum information is essential to support data entry in the Student Information System and the publication of curriculum requirements for students and staff. The template for curriculum requirements includes:

- Prerequisites for admission to the program, if any
- Course lists for required and elective components of the program
- Other learning activities, if any, associated with the program

Where a major with tracks, concentrations or options is proposed, these must be documented.

Where a major or other substantial component of students' graduation requirements is proposed, **normative student pathways** must be provided: (i) to demonstrate that students will be able to complete degree requirements within the normative period for the four-year degree and within the 126-credit maximum for requirements for undergraduate degrees; (ii) to provide a basis for academic advice for students. The template for documentation of student pathways is available at http://www.ust.hk/provost/ug/course_admin/appendices.html.

Supporting documentation must be provided, dealing with the areas of concern indicated below. To simplify preparation and review of this material, the attached supporting documents should be identified in a **cover sheet** (available at http://www.ust.hk/provost/ug/course_admin/appendices.html). The documentation should include information provided in the presentation of the initial proposal, amended as necessary, in particular:

- Educational objectives and alignment of objectives with role and mission
- Student demand and demand for graduates
- Arrangements for admission and selection, if relevant
- Estimated student enrollment (for majors/minors)
- Consultation with stakeholders
- Benchmarking
- Resources

Supporting information presented for a final proposal should also cover the following areas:

a. Response to issues and questions raised by CUS on the initial proposal

b. Intended learning outcomes (for majors)

Approval of a new major requires presentation of a statement of the intended learning outcomes of the major, in line with the following:

1. Statements should make it possible to understand how the intended learning outcomes of the major relate to desired outcomes for graduates of the **School** and the University: **ABC LIVE**.
2. Outcomes statements for majors should be presented as **an organized list** covering at least three main areas: specific discipline/professional knowledge and competence; higher-order intellectual abilities and general competencies; and personal competencies.
3. The learning outcomes for a major should normally number **fewer than 15 items**.
4. Outcomes statements should be capable of **clear communication**, so that:
 - **Students** understand the goals of their program and the value to them of the learning outcomes
 - **Faculty** understand their own contribution to students' achievement of desired outcomes
 - **External stakeholders** see the relevance and value of the education provided
5. Statements of intended learning outcomes should provide an adequate basis for the design of course requirements and other related **learning experiences** and **assessment** of students.

c. Program management

A final proposal should describe how it is intended to manage the program and ensure that educational quality is maintained and improved. The management of programs should be consistent with the Senate's overall policy for quality assurance, in particular with the requirement that departments are expected to establish:

- Committees and other forums for faculty responsible for courses, programs and other learning activities: (1) to review and monitor admissions and induction, the design of the curriculum and co-curriculum, the delivery of educational programs, the assessment of students, and student advising and mentoring; (2) to agree follow-up action and plans for improvement as necessary; and (3) to monitor the implementation of changes for improvement
- Arrangements for seeking feedback from students and other stakeholders and other evidence of success in achieving intended outcomes, and for taking this feedback into account in decisions
- Arrangements for benchmarking programs and students' achievements relative to international standards in line with School and University policy for external peer review

If the program is to be offered jointly with another institution, the following details should be provided:

- The intended partners and their roles
- Channels of communication among the partner institution(s) and management of the program by the partners
- Arrangements for admissions, teaching, program requirements, program standards, graduation and academic awards

d. Transitional arrangements

Where existing students may be impacted by the introduction of the new program, the transitional arrangements should be clarified and an indication provided that the affected students have been consulted.

B. Changes to Existing Programs

i. Approval of Changes

When proposals to make changes to existing programs are received by the CUS Secretariat, the Secretariat will review the proposed changes and determine whether they will be presented to CUS/Senate for approval, or only for information. Changes to programs that normally will be presented to CUS and Senate for approval include:

- Changes to the program title
- Deviation from University policies for the design of degree programs
- Addition/deletion of options
- Changes to the curriculum that impact more than one-third of the total required credits
- Changes to the program that significantly impact the educational objectives or intended learning outcomes of the program

ii. Documentation for Approval

Changes to an existing program require a recommendation from the relevant Schools/IPO. The recommendation should be submitted using the **prescribed form** (available at http://www.ust.hk/provost/ug/course_admin/appendices.html). The completed form provides basic information including: the title of the program; the unit(s) responsible for delivery; the nature of the recommended change; and the effective date for the recommended change.

The form must be signed by the Dean/Dean's designate/Director IPO. A signed recommendation indicates that the relevant departments and Schools are supportive and that the necessary resources to support changes to the program will be available.

Depending on the type and significance of the recommended changes, the following **supporting information** should be provided:

- a. Reasons for proposing the changes
Outline the benefits the changes will bring to the program

- b. Feedback from stakeholders, including student feedback
Relevant feedback, comments or reports from external advisors; employers; alumni; servicing departments/Schools; and others
The proposal should indicate how these comments and feedback have been addressed
- c. Revised curriculum
- d. Revised sample student pathways
- e. Impact on educational objectives and intended learning outcomes
- f. Transitional arrangements
Where existing students may be impacted by changes, the transitional arrangements should be clarified and an indication provided that the affected students have been consulted.

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Use this form to identify the supporting information provided.

a) Educational Objectives and Alignment of Objectives with Role and Mission

Document(s) attached:

b) Student Demand and Demand for Graduates

Document(s) attached:

c) Arrangements for Admission and Selection (if relevant)

Document(s) attached:

d) Estimated Student Enrollment (for majors/minors)

Document(s) attached:

e) Consultation with Stakeholders

Document(s) attached:

f) Benchmarking

Document(s) attached:

g) Resources

Document(s) attached:

h)* Responses to Issues and Questions Raised by the CUS on the Initial Proposal

Document(s) attached:

i)* Intended Learning Outcomes

Document(s) attached:

j)* Program Management

Document(s) attached:

k)* Transitional Arrangement

Document(s) attached:

**Required for final proposal only.*

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UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM AND COURSE ADMINISTRATION

Approval of Courses and Changes to Courses

The process for the approval of courses and the documentation associated with this process serve two distinct purposes: (1) enabling the relevant committees to make good academic decisions; (2) providing the data necessary for academic administration.

A. Roles in the Approval Process

- i. *Departments or equivalent units* originating a new course have the responsibility to consider the educational need for the course, the role of the course in students' programs of study, and the learning outcomes appropriate for the course. Departments should take into account the guidelines prepared by the OBE Steering Group in the development of courses that meet a threshold standard in their orientation to learning outcomes (see [Annex](#)).

These educational considerations should drive a proposal for the key academic characteristics of the course: credits, academic level, prerequisites, learning outcomes, course design, assessment, and mode of delivery.

Departments will also need to consider administrative issues such as expected registration and registration restrictions, the set-up for sections, and scheduling.

In making a proposal departments are expected to take into account input from students and other stakeholders.

- ii. *School or equivalent recommending committees* must be assured that: the academic and administrative issues have been considered fully and resolved; relevant input has been taken into account; University policy and objectives have been taken into account; complete, accurate information is provided in the recommendation; and the resources necessary to deliver the course will be available.

- iii. *Senate-level committees* need to confirm that: the proposal has gone through the appropriate process; the recommendation conforms to University requirements; and any cross-School issues have been resolved.

B. Level of Approval for Key Course Characteristics

The table below summarizes the key levels of approval for different elements in the set-up of a course. The following general issues should be noted:

- The middle column sets out the information to be provided by the recommending committee (typically the School's UG committee) to CUS. The course-approval template is based on this list of items. The template is available at http://www.ust.hk/provost/ug/course_admin/appendices.html. (see Form 2)
- For some items, the recommending committee is required to provide only a *confirmation* that the issues have been dealt with and resolved, NOT the underlying information reviewed by department and School committees. In particular, although proposed intended learning outcomes are to be included in the approval template, full information about the relation of these learning outcomes to program learning outcomes and the alignment of course design and assessment with learning outcomes is not be required
- Some items included in a proposal to CUS do not require formal approval by CUS, in particular: intended learning outcomes; matters relating to the set-up and scheduling of courses (teaching pattern, section size, frequency of offering); and topics/learning activities. This information should be brought forward only as a basis for the initial set-up of the course by ARRO, and for reference of CUS members
- Items requiring CUS approval also require approval for changes, either through the CUS Secretariat, or by CUS for a *major* change. A UG Course Change/Deletion form is available at http://www.ust.hk/provost/ug/course_admin/appendices.html.

Table

	Proposal: data to be provided by department/ unit	Recommendation: data to be provided by School/ equivalent	Approval: data to be endorsed by Senate committee
About the course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course code - Course title (full and 30 characters) - Outline description (for Catalog) - Credits - Language of instruction/assessment - Default grading scheme - Rationale for introducing the course - Course intended learning outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Relation to other courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prerequisites - Corequisites - Exclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓
Registration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registration restrictions: by program; by year; other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓
Educational: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topics/learning activities - Role/placement of the course in students' programs of study - Relation to program(s) learning outcomes - Assessment of outcomes - Learning environment/reading lists/materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ C C C 	
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extra resources required - Extra resources secured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C 	
Scheduling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student groups expected to require the course - Intended delivery pattern, including scheduled contact hours - Expected section size and number of sections - Expected term(s) offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 	

✓ Data element to be included

C A signed confirmation that the data/issue has been dealt with in the proposal

**Ensuring an Orientation to Intended Learning Outcomes
in the Approval of New Courses**

Courses to be approved for the University Common Core are already required to complete a process that ensures their orientation to agreed outcomes for components of the Core. This requirement is extended to all **new courses** as a condition for approval by CUS.

In practice, CUS cannot review the educational issues in detail and is chiefly concerned with assuring that the relevant policies have been observed. CUS relies on the confirmation by Schools that the agreed process has been followed in preparing and presenting the proposal. At CUS level therefore, proposals will need to:

- i. Include
 - A statement of the course intended learning outcomes
 - A brief explanation of how the intended learning outcomes have been taken into account in the design of learning activities and assessment
 - An indication of the role of the course in students' programs of study as a component of: a foundation or breadth requirement; a minor; a major; or other program element
- ii. Confirm that
 - The intended learning outcomes of the courses are consistent with the role of the courses in the relevant component of students' programs

In providing these elements, Schools and departments should base their course proposals on the following protocol agreed by the OBE Steering Group:

In evaluating the **statements of intended learning outcomes** provided for proposed courses, the following considerations should be taken into account:

- *Clarity of outcomes:* students, other faculty and external stakeholders should be able to understand course ILOs
- *Number of outcomes:* experience indicates that the number of top-level ILO's should be fewer than 10

- *Scope of outcomes:* course ILOs are not necessarily comprehensive. The course design should be clear about the intended scope of course ILOs in the context of other courses in a program of study
- *Level of outcomes:* ILOs should be calibrated to the level of a course, building as necessary on previous courses and contributing to preparation for subsequent courses. Setting the appropriate level for ILOs is critical in the alignment of outcomes to assessment
- *Contribution to program ILOs:* The ILOs of the course reflect the role of the course in the achievement of overall learning outcomes in relevant programs.

Statements explaining the **alignment of ILOs** with learning activities and assessment are expected to show that:

- Learning activities and assessment are *intentionally* driven by the needs of students seeking to achieve the learning outcomes and the need to evaluate students' success
- A *realistic* view has been taken of the capacity of the learning activities planned for the course to enable students to achieve the desired outcomes
- The desired *level of performance* of outcomes has been taken into account
- The alignment built into the course design can be made *apparent to students*

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Approval of Undergraduate Course

Section 1: Academic Administration ⁽¹⁾

1.1 Catalog

- a) Course to be effective from: Academic Year _____ Term _____
- b) Department Code ⁽³⁾: _____ Subject Area ⁽³⁾: _____ Course Number ⁽⁴⁾: _____
 Previous Course Code ⁽⁵⁾: _____
- c) Full Title ⁽⁶⁾ (max. 100 characters): _____
- d) Abbreviated Title ⁽⁷⁾ (max. 30 characters): _____
- e) Course Credits ⁽⁸⁾: ☐ Fixed: _____ ☐ Range: From _____ To _____

- f) Catalog Description ⁽⁹⁾ (word limit = 150):

- g) Default Grading Type ⁽¹⁰⁾: ☐ Letter Grades ☐ Distinction/Credit/Pass/Fail ☐ Pass/ Fail
☐ Distinction/Pass/Fail ☐ Others (please specify): _____

- h) ☐ Prerequisites ⁽¹¹⁾:

Course Code / Public Exam	Course Title / Exam Subject and Level / Grade attained

- i) ☐ Corequisites ⁽¹²⁾:

Course Code / Public Exam	Course Title

- j) ☐ Equivalent ⁽¹³⁾:

Course Code	Course Title

- k) ☐ Exclusions ⁽¹⁴⁾:

Course Code / Public Exam	Course Title / Exam Subject and Level / Grade attained

- l) Enrollment Requirements ⁽¹⁵⁾ ☐ No ☐ Yes

- ☐ Year of study: _____
- ☐ Program of study: _____
- ☐ Others (e.g. instructors' approval): _____

m) Medium of Instruction/Materials⁽¹⁶⁾: ☐ English ☐ Others, (Pls specify and provide a justification in Section 1.3):

n) Repeat Course for Credits:

☐ No ☐ Once ☐ Twice ☐ Others, pls specify:

1.2 Contribution of course to Programs of Study [Check all appropriate boxes below]

Major

Program of Study	As		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Required Course	<input type="checkbox"/> Elective	<input type="checkbox"/> Prerequisite

Minor

Program of Study	As		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Required Course	<input type="checkbox"/> Elective	<input type="checkbox"/> Prerequisite

 Common Core

☐ Others (pls specify):

Program of Study	As		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Required Course	<input type="checkbox"/> Elective	<input type="checkbox"/> Prerequisite

1.3 Rationale for Introducing this course and other relevant information⁽¹⁷⁾

[illegible]

Section 2A: Learning Outcomes and Alignment *(for courses not proposed to be Common Core Courses)*

2.1 **Key Course Intended Learning Outcomes** *(Should not normally exceed six or eight outcomes)*

Knowledge/Content Related:

Academic Skills/Competencies:

Other Learning Outcomes:

2.2 **Contribution of Learning Outcomes to Programs of Study identified in Section 1.2** *(Please also complete Section 3.1)*

Section 2B: Additional Information⁽²⁾ (for courses not proposed to be Common Core Courses)

2.3 Planned Teaching Arrangement

Teaching Activity		Weekly Scheduled Hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lecture	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tutorial	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seminar/Small-class	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laboratory	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Others, pls specify:	

2.4 Planned Assessment Weightings

Assessment Tasks		Proportion of Final Grade [%]
<input type="checkbox"/>	In-class test	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mid-term test	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final exam	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Written Assignment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Report	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning Portfolio	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Participation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peer Evaluation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Others, pls specify:	

2.5 Alignment of Outcomes, Learning Activities and Assessment

--

2.6 Course Duration

☐ 1 term ☐ 2 terms ☐ Others, pls specify: _____

2.7 Planned Frequency of Offerings:

<input type="radio"/> Every Fall	<input type="radio"/> Every Winter
<input type="radio"/> Every Spring	<input type="radio"/> Every Summer
<input type="radio"/> Every term	<input type="radio"/> Every other year
<input type="radio"/> This is a double-term course	
<input type="radio"/> Other (pls specify): _____	

2.8 Course outline attached

☐ No ☐ Yes

2.9 Resources

Request extra resources for teaching this course? ☐ No ☐ Yes

Section 3: Development, Concurrence and Approval

3.1 Contribution to the Program Learning Outcomes

(To be completed by EACH of the program(s) of study noted under Section 1.2)

<input type="checkbox"/> The course contributes to this Major/Minor* Program: _____ (* Delete as appropriate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> The relevant program learning outcomes are attached.	
<input type="checkbox"/> On behalf of this program of study, I confirm that the course will contribute appropriately to overall program learning outcomes.	
<u>Position / Name:</u>	<u>Signature</u>
<u>Date</u>	
Program Director / Head of Department: _____	

<input type="checkbox"/> The course contributes to this Major/Minor* Program: _____ (* Delete as appropriate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> The relevant program learning outcomes are attached.	
<input type="checkbox"/> On behalf of this program of study, I confirm that the course will contribute appropriately to overall program learning outcomes.	
<u>Position / Name:</u>	<u>Signature</u>
<u>Date</u>	
Program Director / Head of Department: _____	

3.2 Approvals

Department/Program unit level Recommendation			
<input type="checkbox"/> Offering Department/Program Unit: (Please specify unit): _____	<u>Position / Name:</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Date</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommending School/IPO: (Please specify): _____			
School-level Concurrence			
<u>Name of School/Unit</u>	<u>Position / Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Date</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____

Notes:

(1) Academic Administration

Information in these sections will be considered by the Committee as a basis for approval of the proposed new course.

(2) Additional Information

Data in this section does not require approval of the Committee. It is presented to the Committee only as supplementary information to assist the Committee in evaluation of the course.

(3) Department Code and Subject Area

They refer to the offering department and the discipline of the course. For instance, a Bioengineering course should put “CBME” in the field of “Department Code” and “BIEN” in “Subject Area”.

(4) Course Number

1xxx = an introductory course

2xxx = an intermediate course

3xxx/4xxx = an advanced course / course for specialist study

(5) Previous Course Code

Applicable only if the course had been offered before as a special topics course.

(6) Full Title

The title will appear in all official documents. Max. length = 100 characters (spaces included)

(7) Abbreviated Title

Should be a direct abbreviation of the title. An abbreviated title must be provided when the full title exceeds 30 characters (including space).

(8) Course Credits

In the assignment of credits to courses, reference should be made to the ‘benchmark’ assignment of 3 credits for courses with 3 instructional-hours per week for a full 14-week term, and requiring 2-hours per week of student preparation for each instructional hour. For this calculation, ‘instruction hours’ means all required, scheduled hours of instruction. This benchmark implies a student workload of 40 to 50 hours per credit.

(9) Catalog Description

Section (1): Provide an outline of the course in about 30 words (3 lines). See the current issue of Course Catalog for reference formats.

Section (2) (if necessary): Include special enrollment requirements or grading requirements (such as the use of PP grade, the P/F or DI/PA/F grading system), if there is any. For HUMA/SOSC courses, the [PU], [CA] or [C] notation should be included here if the School of Humanities and Social Science has so approved. [PU] and [CA] denotes that the spoken language used in teaching is Putonghua and Cantonese respectively; while [C] indicates that although the course is not taught in Chinese, it may require students to read materials in Chinese.

(10) Default Grading Type

Special grading, such as PP, P/F or DI/PA/F, cannot be used for the course unless it is specified in the approved course information.

(11) Prerequisite(s)

A prerequisite may be an attainment in public examination or an existing/previously offered course (including special topics courses). The prerequisite must be obtained, or taken and passed before a student may register for credit in this (proposed) course.

(12) Corequisite(s)

A corequisite is a course which must be taken prior to, or at the same time as, the specified course.

(13) Equivalent Courses

Where more than one course meets a requirement of a program of study, these courses may be designated as equivalent courses. Students may not earn credits for more than one equivalent course.

(14) Exclusion(s)

Students who have achieved a specified attainment in public examinations or have completed, or are registered in, a specified course may not register for credit in an excluded course.

(15) Enrollment Requirements

Enrollment requirements serve to restrict the class enrollment to specified groups of students (e.g. “For Science students in their second year of study”, “For GBUS students only”, “For students with consent from the instructor only”) on top of prerequisites/corequisites. If departments/units wish to set this up for the course proposed, please check the box “Yes” and specify such enrollment requirements in “catalog descriptions” (f).

In most cases, departments/units can work out a “reserved quota” with ARRO per each time of course offering to prioritize certain groups of students (e.g. students studying relevant major or minor programs), instead of setting fixed enrollment requirements. For these cases, please check the box “No”.

(16) Medium of Instruction/Materials

Exceptions to the general University policy that English is the medium of instruction will only be permitted when the courses are related to the area of Chinese studies and are approved by the School of Humanities and Social Science. Courses approved to be taught in Chinese should carry a [PU] or [CA] notation in the course description, which indicates the spoken language used in teaching: [PU] stands for Putonghua; and [CA] for Cantonese.

Courses marked with a [C] in the catalog description are not taught in Chinese but may require students to read materials in Chinese.

(17) Rationale for introducing this course and other relevant information

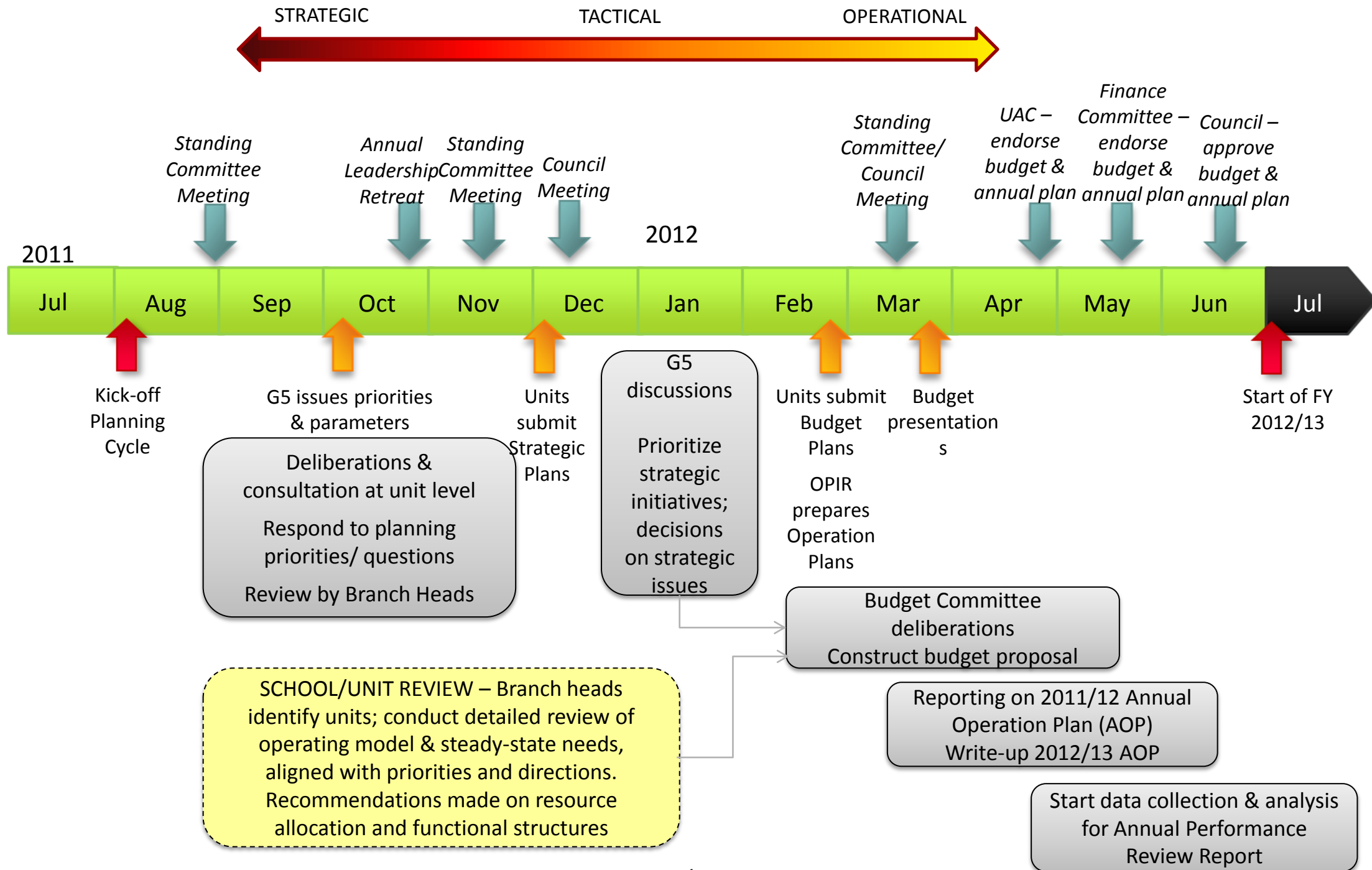
Other relevant information includes, e.g., justification for using language other than English as the medium of instruction/materials, the reason for allowing students to repeat the course for credits)

Appendix 2:

Timeline for Annual Operation /
Budget Planning Cycle 2011-12

ANNUAL OPERATION/BUDGET PLANNING CYCLE

Appendix 2



Appendix 3:

Report on Good Practice in Use of Student Feedback

COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY

- Title:** Report on good practice in use of student feedback
- Purpose:** The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) Audit Report was published in November 2010. The Committee on Teaching and Learning Quality (CTLQ) subsequently discussed the audit outcomes in its 26th meeting on 30 November 2010. As a follow-up on ***Recommendation 2: The QAC recommends that HKUST devise a formal system of informing students about changes made as a result of input through the various feedback mechanisms in place***, the CTLQ Secretariat has conducted a study of international good practice on arrangements for student feedback, particularly of strategies and methods for closing the communication loop with students.
- Prepared by:** CTLQ Secretariat **Date:** 6 February 2012

Introduction

According to the QAC Audit Report, *the University needs to improve its use of empirical data for decision making, planning, performance monitoring and so on. HKUST collects student feedback through the Student Feedback Questionnaire (SFQ) and the Student Engagement and Satisfaction Questionnaire (SESQ) as well as through focus groups convened on an ad hoc basis. Results of the SFQ are made available on-line and students reported that some of the teaching staff inform them in class of changes made as a result of student feedback. However, many students interviewed by the Panel were unaware of any changes that may have been made and some were sceptical about the impact of their feedback. While there are a number of informal channels through which some students receive feedback, there seems to be no systematic way of devising action plans based on results of surveys and closing the loop by informing the students of changes being made as a result of their input.*

To address the above, the CTLQ Secretariat has reviewed the practice of local and international universities and education institutions in addressing student feedback, in particular their strategies for closing the communication loop with students, see Annex.

The existing practice of the University has also been reviewed.

Key Findings

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the experience of other institutions and related research:

1. Students are more inclined to engage in their studies and in quality systems when they are informed by their university about what happens to any feedback they provide, and about any related changes. (QAA, Chapter B5: Student Engagement, Indicator 3)
2. When students participate in an evaluation process, their main concerns are whether their opinions mattered and what happens as a result of their responses. (University of Canberra)
3. Informing students of actions resulting from student surveys demonstrates that student opinion is valued and that their contribution to the process of continuous improvement really counts. (Monash University)
4. Any improvements that can be made to closing the loop will improve the likelihood of student providing feedback in the future. (Watson, 2003)

On the basis of these findings, Leckey and Neill (2001) argue that closing the loop is an important issue in quality enhancement. “If students do not see any actions resulting from their feedback, they may become skeptical and unwilling to participate”.

Best Practice

Despite this understanding of the value of closing the loop with students, practical arrangements to achieve this appear to be difficult to implement, and the process of closing the loop can be the most demanding aspect of seeking student feedback (CRQ, 2001). Major mechanisms are:

- Student representation on committees
- Induction programs for new student representatives to promote their understanding of university’s governance and the functions of the committees
- Information to new students on how previous student feedback has been used to improve learning and teaching in first lessons
- Incorporation of analysis, evaluation and reporting on the student voice at both program level and university level, so that students continue to engage in the process

The University of Sydney notes that good practice in the use of student feedback needs to be disseminated across the university, not only at meetings of committees and working groups, but also at other forms, and made publicly available on the university website.

Existing Practice in HKUST

Arrangements for closing the feedback loop are already in place in HKUST. CTLQ has published a good practice guide: *Good Practice for Student Participation in Quality Assurance and Enhancement*. This guideline covers:

- Communication with students
- Feedback for monitoring and improvement
- Engagement in a partnership for learning
- The need to close the feedback loop

At departmental level, the staff and student liaison committees regularly meet student representatives to discuss their concern. This provides an opportunity for follow-up actions to be relayed back to students.

With regard to central student services, student representatives participate in providing feedback on routine operation. Students receive regular updates from support units and the Student Affairs Office is proactive in responding to students' feedback.

The Center for Enhanced Learning and Teaching (CELT) conducts university-wide student surveys including the Student Feedback Questionnaire (SFQ) and the Student Engagement and Satisfaction Questionnaire (SESQ). Staff and students can access results of SFQ on the web. CELT also organizes forums to report back survey findings to staff and students.

Recommendation

This review suggests that no single institutional change can fully address this concern. It is recommended CTLQ communicates the high value of closing the loop with students, while recognizing the need for different approaches in different circumstances.

While the guideline document *Good Practice for Student Participation in Quality Assurance and Enhancement* has been helpful, it may be timely to review and revise this document, increasing the emphasis on closing the loop.

To ensure that progress is being made, it is recommended that CTLQ requires that annual reports on teaching and learning quality from Schools and academic-support units report specifically on feedback to students following up on their suggestions for improvement.

References on student feedback

Website Information:

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, (QAA) UK

UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B5: Student Engagement, Draft for consultation (February 2012)

University of Canberra

Strategies for “closing the loop” with students

<http://www.canberra.edu.au/tlc/evaluation/strategies-for-closing-the-loop-with-students>

Monash University

Providing feedback to students: closing the feedback loop

University of Southampton

Quality Handbook > Handbook > Student Feedback Policy

https://sharepoint.soton.ac.uk/sites/ese/quality_handbook/Handbook/Student%20Feedback%20Policy.aspx

The University of Western Australia

Closing the feedback loop

Audit Reports of Hong Kong universities issued by Quality Assurance Council

Articles:

Centre for Research into Quality (CRQ) (2001) Integrating Feedback Update: the Newsletter of the Centre of Research into Quality, issue 15, March

Leckey, J. and Neill, N. (2001) Quantifying Quality: The Importance of Student Feedback, Quality in Higher Education 7(1)

Symons, Rachel Office of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), The University of Sydney (2006) Listening to the student voice at the University of Sydney: closing the loop in the quality enhancement and improvement cycle

Watson, Sarah (June 2003) Closing the Feedback Loop: Ensuring Effective Action from Student Feedback, Tertiary Education and Management

Appendix 4:

HKUST E-learning Strategic Plan 2011-2014

Vision, Mission, Strategy, Goals, Outcomes and Success Indicators

VISION MISSION	Any learning opportunity, any HKUST community member, anytime, anywhere. An innovative, agile and cost effective elearning environment that enables and enhances the delivery of quality higher education.								
GOALS	To deliver and enhance education through Elearning that inspires students to succeed, fosters high expectations and prepares them for participation in a sustainable society through elearning.		To value our staff and provide a working environment that acknowledges their contribution and builds elearning capacity.	To enhance strong management and leadership in elearning through its innovative use at HKUST			To maximize return on investment in education through responsive and sustainable management		
	Elearning Working Group (Scope and Role)								
ELEARNING STRATEGY	Learning and Teaching	Learning Management	Enhancing People’s Capacity	Information Management	Enhancing Underlying Elearning Infrastructure	Effective Stakeholder Engagement	Enhancing the Delivery of Elearning Services	Elearning Process Excellence	Effective Elearning Governance
	Promote, develop and provide the elearning environment and initiatives that facilitate, foster and improve teaching and learning to meet individual student needs.	Deliver standardized, secure, scalable student and learning management systems that support the learning and teaching environment.	Ensure that our people have the appropriate competencies and skills to deliver the range of services required by the institution.	Manage HKUST information assets to promote standardized, integrated and leveraged information across the institution that enhances learning, decision making and reporting.	Establish and maintain an enterprise wide elearning infrastructure that underpins the delivery of institutional goals	Engage with stakeholders to deliver services that are aligned with HKUST’s strategic plan and goals.	Quantify, deliver and improve best practice services that rely on elearning platforms.	Deliver high quality effective and efficient integrated systems to support the institutions’ processes.	Develop and ensure the assignment of appropriate inputs, decision rights and accountabilities to ensure appropriate investment in elearning and encourage desirable behaviour in its use.
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Individual learning environments using blended learning opportunitiesOn-line teacher professional developmentUbiquitous access to learning opportunities and resourcesCollaborative learning environments and communitiesDevelopment of elearning support for the learning and teaching programsTeacher staff control learning environment within a standardized frameworkStudents highly engaged via elearning environmentImproved learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Elearning systems that efficiently support teaching, learning, reporting, and institutional servicesImproved consistency and availability of reporting for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Student performanceResource managementImproved decision makingImproved accountability and reporting on student performanceImproved access to quality assured digital and other teaching and learning resourcesSingle academic record for each studentImproved teacher access to information to manage learning outcomesImproved capacity to develop individualized learning programsImproved efficiencies in student and learning administration for teachers and office staffMobile access to student assessment recording.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Retention of high value and skilled staffImproved match between people skills and organizational requirementsEnhanced regional capabilityIncreased staff capability across technology and businessInnovative application of elearning to institution needsOn-line elearning professional development capabilityImproved engagement and understanding of the institution by elearning related staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consistent campus-wide view of students across all systemsWhere possible, data captured once only, as close as possible to the sourceConsistent quantitative reportingImproved institutional, financial and other decision makingImproved institutional, financial and other decision makingImproved data availability and traceabilityImproved data qualityDefined and maintained institutional meta dataPublished master and reference data sourcesSingle standardized records tracking systemCompliance with national and state government reporting requirementsAccurate web-based directory services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved access and availability to institutional systems and servicesElearning education continuity plans that are in placeInfrastructure procurement that facilitates the on-time delivery of educational initiativesElearning infrastructure of a design that is responsive to teaching and learning initiativesInfrastructure secured according to business riskInfrastructure supplied and managed to international benchmark standardsInfrastructure complies with enterprise architecture standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Elearning is seen as an essential and valued resourceElearning staff have sufficient understanding of institutional areas to provide technology advice in educational provisionIncreased relationship building skills amongst elearning staffElearning staff have capability to deliver services and projectsStakeholders engaged in the design, development and implementation of services and productsIncreased awareness throughout the institution of elearning products, services and strategyImproved partnering with institutes and regionsTechnology solutions demonstrably addressing institutional business driversStrategic plans of portfolios have an elearning component aligned with the institutional elearning Strategic PlanImproved return on elearning investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Communication with users about the services that are delivered and that will be delivered in the futureImproved information for customersFully costed and reported delivery of elearning servicesProfessional delivery of appropriate elearning services based on defined institutional requirementsEffective program and project management capabilities to deliver educational provisionsIncreased service levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved and responsive institutional and support services aligned to the learning and teaching needs of the institutionInformation management systems that effectively support shared institutional services business reformImproved capacity for business analysis and decision supportReduced administrative costsIncreased devolution of accountabilityImproved ability to invest in educational strategiesImproved access to institutional information assets (HR, finance, payroll)Improved decision making at all levels through increased flexibility for unit/department leadersInformation management systems that effectively support compliance reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agreed annual elearning capital investment programClearer business objectives for elearning investmentStable governance mechanismsAgreed IT policies, guidelines, procedures and standardsAppropriate executive participation in elearning governanceAgreed elearning prioritiesMore focused elearning strategies.
SUCCESS INDICATORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Available, responsive on-line learning environmentsResponsive network applicationsEnhanced graduate attributesPercentage of programs/courses and other education provisions connected to content sourcesSatisfied and engaged students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Motivated and skilled staffIncreased elearning literacy of teachers and studentsImmediate online enrolment and paymentLearning management systems that allow teachers to engage in blended delivery and professional developmentIncrease in the prevalence and use of online learning communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved user satisfaction survey resultsStaff turnover ratesProgression against behavioral based competenciesProject delivery success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduction in number of application interfacesIncreased number of applications conforming to enterprise data modelIncreased reporting accuracyIncreased reporting complianceReduced data duplications and omissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">AvailabilityPredictabilityResponsivenessResilienceTrust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increasing proportion of customers satisfied with elearning servicesIncreased retention of competent elearning staffImproved overall staff satisfaction levelsEnterprise-wide understanding of elearning strategyIncreased percentage of customers aware of elearning servicesIncreased compliance to prescribed elearning architecture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduced cost of supportElearning service performance against defined and benchmarked metricsUser satisfaction survey resultsProject performance measured against agreed metricsEnsure appropriate support services are available to allow staff with disabilities to effectively participate in professional development activities such as physical access, requirements for sign language interpreter and adaptive technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Positive improvements in competitive performance benchmarking with other institutional service delivery systemsPercentage reduction in incidents due to improved risk analysisDelivery of sub-programs of work on time and within budgetAccuracy and management of budget to forecastCost reduction in high volume procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Percentage of elearning projects:<ul style="list-style-type: none">On timeOn budgetMeeting user satisfaction via surveyPercentage total elearning spendsubject to prioritization processPercentage total elearning spend trend towards front-line service improvement and line of businessPercentage of programs/courses and other educational provisions adopting a blended learning reference model

Appendix 5:

Quality Assurance Annual Report Exercise 2010-11

Information on the Quality Assurance Annual Report Exercise 2010-11

(extracted from the website site: http://qa.ust.hk/faculty_exercise.html)

The Quality Assurance Annual Reporting Exercise 2010-2011

Schools and Departments

Under the framework, *The Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning at HKUST*, departments/divisions and Schools together with academic support units are requested to provide annual reports based on designated report templates. Departments/divisions provide annual reports to Schools, and Schools to provide annual reports to the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning Quality (CTLQ), based on information from the departments/divisions and relating to the Schools own activities. CTLQ then reports on the exercise to the Senate. This annual reporting exercise provides the backbone for the University's monitoring of quality assurance practice and educational quality and is a source of improvement in teaching and learning by encouraging a reflective and forward-looking review of programs and sharing good practice.

QA Annual Report Templates

- For Undergraduate Program (Department / Division) (Annex 1)
- For Taught Postgraduate Program (Program Office / Associated Department)
- For School/IPO (Annex 2)
- For Academic Support Unit

Timeline for Annual Reporting 2010-11	
September 2011	Templates and relevant information to be distributed to reporting units
October 2011	Academic departments/divisions and program offices prepare annual reports and submit to Schools / Interdisciplinary Programs Office
November 2011	Schools / IPO prepare annual reports at School level and submit them to CTLQ Academic support units prepare annual reports and submit to line managers
January 2012	CTLQ prepares findings on reports received and submits a report to Senate

Data Sets for Annual Reporting

The following sets of data are provided to help departments/divisions to reflect on their work. Reports should emphasize evidence-based evaluation and follow-up.

Undergraduate Programs

- 1) Enrolment 2010-11
- 2) Trend of JUPAS Score over the years
- 3) Classification of Honor and Course Grade Distribution 2010-11
- 4) Undergraduate Employment Survey 2010
- 5) Survey on Non-academic Background of Undergraduate Students 2010
- 6) Course Evaluation Results
- 7) Results of Student Engagement and Satisfaction Questionnaire (SESQ) 2010-11
Detailed results of the SESQ 2010-11 will be distributed to Schools via internal delivery.

Taught Postgraduate Programs

- 1) Statistics extracted from *Statistical Information on PG Students 2010-2011*
- 2) Results of Postgraduate Employment Survey 2010

Annual Reporting Guidelines



(Annex 3)

Good Practice in Annual Reporting



2006/2007



2007/2008



2008/2009



2009/2010

Data Archive

[2008-09](#)

[2009-10](#)



Departmental Annual Report on Undergraduate Education Academic Year 2010/2011

Source of the Report	
Department	
School	

Author Details	
Name	
Email	

Checklist – to be completed by the author of the annual report prior to submission	
1) The annual report has been considered by faculty members in a formal meeting at Departmental level.	Yes / No
2) The data on the QA website http://qa.ust.hk/faculty_exercise.html have been helpful in preparing the annual report.	Yes / No

Head of Department's Endorsement
Date:

Departmental Annual Report on Undergraduate Education

Part A: Quality Assurance of Undergraduate Education⁽¹⁾

Has the department implemented the QA system and related policies according to the University's framework?

Enter the text here...

Part B: Teaching, Learning and Assessment⁽²⁾

B1. Stakeholder Feedback

Have stakeholders including students, faculty and external parties expressed their views and suggestions on the quality of teaching, courses and programs? What are the department's responses and follow-up actions?

Enter the text here...

B2. Benchmarking

Has the department carried out any benchmarking in relation to teaching, learning and assessment?

Enter the text here...

B3. Review and Comment on Specified Items

(i) ***Intake Quality and Diversity***

(Reference: *Enrolment 2010 and Trend of JUPAS Score available at Data Sets for Annual Reporting* at http://qa.ust.hk/faculty_exercise.html)

Describe the intake quality and diversity? Any difference comparing with the previous reporting period?

Enter the text here...

(ii) ***Course Evaluation Results (Student Feedback Questionnaire)***

(Reference: <http://www.ust.hk/~webaa/courseval/index.html>)

Has the department reviewed the course evaluation results with instructors? What are the department's follow-up actions?

Enter the text here...

(iii) ***Exit Survey***

(Reference: *Results of Student Engagement and Satisfaction Questionnaire (SESQ) 2010-11*)

Has the department made reference to the SESQ results (eg. Section I. Academic Experience at HKUST) to maintain and improve educational quality?

Enter the text here...

B4. Review of Other Evidence Relevant to the Success of the Program

The relevant information would include data available at http://qa.ust.hk/faculty_exercise.html

Enter the text here...

B5. Planned Actions for the Future and Follow-up Actions Items from Previous Reports

Has the department compiled an action plan for the future to address the key issues / concerns identified from this reporting exercise?

Has the department reviewed the follow-up actions from previous reports?

Enter the text here...

B6. Difficulties for the Development of Programs Including Resources Constraints

Enter the text here...

B7. Examples of Good Practice

Provide brief details of good practices of teaching, learning and assessment which have a particular positive impact on the learning experience of the students and/or the success of the program.

Enter the text here...

B8. Other Information and Comments *(such as statistical observations and special events and activities)*

Enter the text here....

NOTES

1. In completing **Part A** department may make reference to the quality assurance framework of the University: *The Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning at HKUST* available at http://qa.ust.hk/qa_framework.html. The major requirements are:
 - The department has in place committees or equivalent forums to review: admissions and induction of students; academic programs, courses and the co-curriculum delivered by the department; mentoring and advising; and student assessment and academic progress.
 - The role of individuals and committees is clearly assigned within a system that is designed to maintain and improve the quality of teaching and learning.
 - These committees: provide for a range of views to be expressed; consider evidence relevant for evaluating performance; share good practice; determine an agenda for action; and to follow up on planned action. In particular:
 - The department has taken advantage of external peer review and input from employers, professional bodies and others to benchmark academic standards and the quality of educational provision and the preparation of graduates for employment or graduate studies.
 - There are regular opportunities for students/student representatives to meet with faculty responsible for courses and programs and to freely express their views.
 - The relevant committees have met regularly and have documented their work.
2. In completing **Part B** department may wish to consider the following checklist of areas of concerns but reports are NOT expected to cover all areas:

Areas of concern	
<u>Admissions</u> Recruitment and selection Admissions data and quality of admissions	<u>Orientation and induction of students</u> Orientation and induction activities for new students Advising and mentoring of new students
<u>Development of the curriculum</u> Development of program/course objectives and outcomes Significant changes made/planned for the curriculum Difficulties and issues in developing the curriculum	<u>Development of the co-curriculum</u> Significant changes made/planned for the co-curriculum Difficulties and issues in developing the co-curriculum
<u>Teaching and learning</u> Innovation in delivery of teaching and learning Support for professional development of faculty, instructors and teaching assistants Incentives and recognition for good performance	<u>Learning environment</u> Student advising and mentoring Facilities, including: laboratories, study space, classrooms Learning resources, including: Library, on-line resources Availability of elective courses requested by students Class size, access to faculty, student campus engagement
<u>Assessment</u> Review of assessment results, including graduation results Application of Senate policy for grading, plagiarism and academic integrity	<u>Graduation and placement</u> Graduate employment and further study



School Annual Report on
Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Education
Academic Year 2010/2011

Source of the Report	
School	

Author Details	
Name	
Email	

Checklist – to be completed by the author of the annual report prior to submission	
1) The annual report has been considered by faculty members in a formal meeting at School level.	Yes / No
2) The data on the QA website http://qa.ust.hk/faculty_exercise.html have been helpful in preparing the annual report.	Yes / No

Dean's Endorsement
Date:

School Annual Report on Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Education

Part A: Quality Assurance of Education Programs

(The School may make reference to the quality assurance framework of the University: *The Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning at HKUST* available at http://qa.ust.hk/qa_framework.html.)

A1. Annual Reports on Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Education

Have the Departments/Divisions and Programs under the School provided annual reports in line with Senate's policy and guidelines and School requirements?

Enter the text here...

A2. Arrangements to Maintain and Improve Educational Quality

Have the Departments/Divisions and Programs under the School undertaken arrangements to maintain and improve educational quality?

Enter the text here...

A3. Committees or Equivalent Forums to Consider Issues Relating Teaching and Learning at School-level

Has the School established committees or equivalent forums to consider issues relating to teaching and learning that arise at School-level?

Enter the text here...

Part B: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

B1. Important Achievements

Describe the most important achievements over the reporting period of the School and Departments/Programs in teaching, learning and assessment

Enter the text here...

B2. External Peer Review or Inputs

Give an account of the results of external peer review exercises or external inputs over the reporting period

Enter the text here...

B3. Review and Comment on Specified Items, Areas of Concern and Follow Up

Respond to review and comment on specified items, as well as areas of concern raised by Department/Program Annual Reports and in School-level, discussion and follow-up

Enter the text here...

B4. Future Plans

Describe future plans to maintain and improve educational quality

Enter the text here...

B5. Examples of Good Practice

Provide brief details of good practices of teaching, learning and assessment which have a particular positive impact on the learning experience of the students and/or the success of the programs.

Enter the text here...

B6. Issues of Broad Institutional Interest *(if not yet reported in other items of this report)*

Enter the text here...

B7. Other Information and Comments *(such as statistical observations and special events and activities)*

Enter the text here....

How to Prepare an Annual Report on Teaching and Learning

Step 1

Review the data provided. The results of the exit survey of UG students (SESQ) are particularly important.

Consider additional information that might be helpful: the number of students in UROP/internships/exchange; student academic progress; graduate employment.....

Ask colleagues to provide input on “good practice”: innovation in teaching or assessment; student advising and mentoring; co-curricular activities.....

Step 2

Look at the results of stakeholder feedback

- What did students contribute through joint meetings or focus-group sessions?
- What have alumni or employer contacts or formal sessions contributed?
- Have there been visits/reviews by academic peers?

Consider accreditation-related feedback to report, or other benchmarking activities

Step 3

Reflect on the data and feedback. What does it indicate about areas of strength and weakness, what issues have been raised?

Reflect on your unit's QA arrangements

- Is QA aligned with the requirements of the HKUST QA Framework?
- Could arrangements be streamlined or strengthened?
- Are decision-makers receiving the information they require?
- Have stakeholders been informed of decision makers' actions?

Step 4

Make a determination of the key issues for the reporting period and the priorities for the year ahead.

Step 5

Provide a Draft report based on Steps 1 to 4. Discuss the Draft with colleagues. Present the Draft through the Head to the Department.

Develop a revised Report, based on comments.

Some Dos and Don'ts

- **Do** keep the Report brief (no more than five pages for department reports on UG education and TPG programs)
- **Do** show that evidence has been reviewed and has had an impact on plans
- **Do** try to identify trends and patterns
- **Do** give priority to feedback from “external points of reference”
- **Do** refer back to action items from previous reports
- **Do** be frank and self-critical, but, where you express concerns, show that there are plans for improvement
- **Do** make the most of the good things you are doing for student learning
- **Do** try to demonstrate that your QA process is working: issues have been raised in the right committee, referred to the right place, and dealt with
- **Do** be forward-looking and present plans for action

-
- **Don't** reproduce data that is already available
 - **Don't** make assertions unless you have some evidence or examples that can back them up
 - **Don't** simply describe your existing QA arrangements or activities supporting students without reflection and evaluation
 - **Don't** try to be comprehensive, focus on areas of concern for the reporting period

Appendix 6:

Report on Good Practice for Assessment Policy

COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING QUALITY

- Title:** Report on good practice for assessment policy
- Purpose:** The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) Audit Report was published in November 2010. The Committee on Teaching and Learning Quality (CTLQ) discussed the audit outcomes in its 26th meeting on 30 November 2010. As a follow-up on *Recommendation 6: The QAC recommends that HKUST develop an institutional assessment policy based on international best practice with reference to the number; timing and scale of assessment tasks and the nature of feedback to students on their performance relative to course ILOs*, the CTLQ Secretariat has conducted a study of international good practice for assessment policy, especially in the area of workload and student feedback.
- Prepared by:** CTLQ Secretariat **Date:** 13 February 2012

Introduction

According to the QAC Audit Report, *the Panel noted concern among some students and staff about the sheer volume of assessment.....The number, timing and scale of assessment tasks need to be examined on a programme by programme basis so that students are not overloaded and over-assessed. The mapping of programme ILOs to assessment tasks provides an ideal opportunity to undertake this exercise. The Panel also heard that feedback on assessment tasks is often cursory or episodic, with minimal or no comments to inform and guide students.*

To address the above, the CTLQ Secretariat has undertaken a broad scan of good practice for assessment policy in overseas universities and educational institutions, see Annex.

The existing guidelines and practice of the University have also been reviewed.

Key Findings

The main elements of good practice in assessment as indicated in the review are:

- i. The amount and timing of assessments should enable effective and appropriate measurement of students' achievement of intended learning outcomes (QAA, UK).
- ii. In setting assessment tasks, distribution and completion of assessment tasks should be coordinated to minimize stress and pressure for both students and teachers. (City University of Hong Kong, QAA, UK)
- iii. Students should have adequate time to reflect on learning before being assessed. (QAA, UK)
- iv. Different assessment methods are appropriate for different assessment purposes. A variety of assessment methods can minimize the disadvantages of each. A mix of assessment methods is fairer than a single method. (University College London, University of Glasgow, Northumbria University)
- v. Assessment of a course should not rely on a final examination as the only form of assessment. (University of Canberra)
- vi. Students should be provided with timely and constructive feedback on assessment tasks explicitly related to the learning outcomes. Feedback supports student learning and provides advice on how performance can be improved. (University of Canberra)

Generally speaking, these elements of good practice are presented in the form of advice and encouragement. Rules and requirements limiting the flexibility of examiners and programs are not a feature of international good practice.

Existing Practice in HKUST

In November 2009, the University approved the guideline *Assessment of Students: Course Grading, Guidelines and Good Practice*. This guideline is clear that assessment of students is an opportunity for learning and sets out a general rubric for student grading on the basis of learning outcomes.

The guideline does not include more general advice on assessment practice. However the Center for Enhanced Learning and Teaching does provide extensive advice and support and links to resources, see <http://celt.ust.hk/teaching-resources/assessment-learning>.

Recommendations

It is not recommended that University adopts a rules and requirements as a means to improve practice in the assessment of students. However, consideration should be given to enhancing the existing guideline statement to include a clearer account of good practice in assessment.

A review of existing assessment practice may be useful as a basis for further efforts to encourage faculty and programs to adopt an assessment plan that takes into account the burden of assessments on students and faculty and ensures that useful feedback can be given. It is understood that in the period of the double-cohort it will be more difficult to stabilize such arrangements.

References on Assessment Policy

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, (QAA) UK
Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education, Section 6: Assessment of students
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/COP_AOS.pdf

University of Cambridge
Assessment Practices and Expectations: Educational and Student Policy,
<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/curricula/practices.html>

University of Canberra
Policy: Assessment Policy
https://guard.canberra.edu.au/policy/policy.php?pol_id=2900

City University of Hong Kong
University Assessment Policy and Principles for Taught Programmes (Version 2, May 2011)
http://www.cityu.edu.hk/qac/assessment_policy/Assessment_Policy_revised_July_2011_WD_definitions.pdf

University College London
Lewis Elton (2002) Good Assessment Practice

University of Glasgow
Assessment Policy February 2011
<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/academic/assessmentpolicies/assessmentpolicy/#d.en.192547>

Northumbria University
Guidelines for Good Assessment Practice
<http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/lteia/enhance/assessfeedback/>

University of Technology Sydney
Assessment 2020: Seven propositions for assessment reform in higher education

Appendix 7:

Abbreviations

Abbreviations

AOP	Annual Operation Planning
CELT	Center for Enhanced Learning and Teaching
CTLQ	Committee on Teaching and Learning Quality
HKUST	The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
LLCs	Living Learning Communities
OBE	Outcome-Based Education
OPIR	Office of the Planning and Institutional Research
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
TDG	Teaching Development Grant
UROP	Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program



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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**