

Report of a Quality Audit of Sub-degree Operations *of* City University of Hong Kong



March 2019
Quality Assurance Council

**Quality Assurance Council
Sub-degree Audit Cycle**

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Sub-degree Operations of
City University of Hong Kong**

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The Quality Assurance Council is a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under the aegis of the University Grants Committee of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

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PREFACE

Background

The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) was established in April 2007 as a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under the aegis of the University Grants Committee (UGC) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

UGC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the quality of UGC-funded universities and their activities. In view of universities' expansion of their activities and a growing public interest in quality issues, QAC was established to assist UGC in providing third-party oversight of the quality of the universities' educational provision. QAC aims to assist UGC in assuring the quality of programmes (however funded) offered by UGC-funded universities.

Since its establishment, QAC has conducted two rounds of quality audits, the first between 2008 and 2011 and the second between 2015 and 2016. By virtue of its mission, however, these audits conducted prior to end 2016 include only first degree level programmes and above offered by the UGC-funded universities.

In 2016, UGC has assumed the role of the overseeing body of the external quality audits on the sub-degree (SD) operations of the UGC-funded universities, with the involvement of QAC as the audit operator. The SD audit cycle commenced in end 2016 with the promulgation of the Audit Manual.

Conduct of QAC Quality Audits

Audits are undertaken by Audit Panels appointed by QAC from its Register of Auditors. The Audit Panel composes of three auditors who are either international or regional experts in higher education quality assurance, drawn from a higher education system based outside of Hong Kong. The Panel also includes at least two local members, at least one of whom should be drawn from another UGC-funded university.

QAC's core operational tasks derived from its terms of reference are:

- the conduct of institutional quality audits
- the promotion of quality assurance and enhancement and the spread of good practice

QAC's approach to quality audit is based on the principle of 'fitness for purpose'. Audit Panels consider the nature and strength of those operations in terms of the vision, mission and goals of the university and the Sub-degree Providing Unit(s) (SDPU(s)) within it. The degree of alignment between the SDPU(s) and the university's vision, mission, goals and strategic priorities is also considered.

Full details of the audit procedures, including the methodology and scope of the audit, are provided in the QAC Audit Manual on Sub-degree Operations of UGC-funded Universities which is available at http://www.ugc.edu.hk/doc/eng/qac/manual/auditmanual_sub-degree.pdf.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the report of a quality audit of the sub-degree (SD) operations of City University of Hong Kong (the University) by an Audit Panel appointed by, and acting on behalf of, the Quality Assurance Council. The report presents the findings of the quality audit, supported by detailed analysis and commentary on the following Dimensions:

1. governance, management, university planning and accountability
2. approach to programme quality assurance
3. curriculum design, programme development and approval processes
4. programme delivery, including pedagogical approaches, learning environments and resources, scheduling
5. support for teaching quality, including pedagogical development
6. student learning assessment
7. student participation and student support services
8. systems for acting on quality assurance data to make ongoing enhancements to student learning

The audit findings are identified as features of good practice worthy of commendation, recommendations for further consideration by the University, and affirmation of progress with actions already in place as a result of its self-study.

Summary of the principal findings of the Audit Panel

1. Governance, management, university planning and accountability

The University's three Sub-degree Providing Units (SDPUs) have different structures and a degree of autonomy in the management of their responsibilities. All follow University procedures and regulations and all report to the Senate. However, the level of oversight by Senate is relatively limited and focused on identified exceptions. Scrutiny of annual reports takes place at local management boards and at the Quality Assurance Committee. The Panel looked closely at the plans for the transition of the Community College to the University of Wollongong and received assurances that the process was being handled with due regard to the interests of students, staff and key stakeholders.

2. Approach to programme quality assurance

The practices and procedures followed by each of the SDPUs are appropriate, effective and compliant with University requirements, although with some differences in application reflecting the different nature of the programmes involved. The processes are managed within the governance structure of each Unit. The Quality Assurance Committee receives information about the outcomes of quality assurance procedures. However, there is only limited evidence of the

identification of good practice or the sharing of experience by the Committee to promote quality enhancement.

3. *Curriculum design, programme development and approval processes*

The Panel saw clear evidence of the well-developed links with employers and other stakeholders in the design and delivery of SD programmes. The University stresses that its focus is on the success of graduates and confirms the security of its academic standards through the evidence of student achievement. Over-arching expectations are defined by the Discovery-enriched Curriculum and by stated Graduate Attributes, although the Panel found only limited reference to these objectives in the detailed course and programme learning outcomes.

4. *Programme delivery, including pedagogical approaches, learning environments and resources, scheduling*

The Panel confirmed that the procedures for the periodic review of programmes were well established across the three SDPUs and that they involved constructive input from external participants. There is evidence of new approaches to teaching and learning, including the widespread adoption of an outcomes-based approach to programme delivery. However, there has only been limited development of innovative e-pedagogies. Student access to learning resources varies between programmes and campuses. More could be done to ensure the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of key information and the rationalisation of feedback surveys.

5. *Support for teaching quality, including pedagogical development*

There is evidence of participation of teaching staff in scholarship and updating of knowledge, but participation in teaching-related professional development is less apparent and varies across the three SDPUs. Staff performance is largely assessed on the basis of scores from student feedback. Staff receive support from academic leaders and peers if problems are identified. The renewal of staff contracts and pay review are linked to staff appraisal. The criteria for assessment are generally transparent but not clearly stated for all SDPUs. Not all staff are fully aware of the link between salary and teaching performance.

6. *Student learning assessment*

Assessment is outcome-based and managed across the three SDPUs in line with the University's Assessment Policy. The mapping of intended learning outcomes against assessment tasks is widely adopted, although there may be scope for further development in individual programmes. The University has a robust policy with regard to academic honesty that is well publicised and understood by students. There are checks in place to identify plagiarism in coursework. The

arrangements for appeals against the outcomes of assessment are less clearly specified and recognised by students.

7. *Student participation and student support services*

A range of services is available to assist students with their studies and career development, including support for English language enhancement and the acquisition of skills for employment. Students are offered assistance with the identification of internship and work-based learning opportunities and there is evidence that placements are well supported by employers. However, the number of students involved is lower than might be expected for professionally orientated programmes. At University level, student involvement in governance is evidenced by membership of student representatives on key University committees. SD students are eligible to participate, but there is no specific expectation of their involvement. The impact of student engagement has been limited to date.

8. *Systems for acting on quality assurance data to make ongoing enhancements to student learning*

The Panel saw evidence in the development of new programmes of the ways in which the University has used feedback from employers to develop a competency-based approach to programme delivery and address the requirements of professional organisations. The performance of SD programmes is not only assessed in terms of the quality of provision and the student experience, but also in terms of financial sustainability and market need. The University adopts a measured and well-informed approach to making decisions about the continuation of under-performing programmes.

INTRODUCTION

Explanation of the audit methodology

This is the report of a quality audit of the sub-degree (SD) operations of City University of Hong Kong (CityU; the University) by an Audit Panel appointed by, and acting on behalf of, the Quality Assurance Council (QAC). It is based on an Institutional Submission which was prepared by the University following a period of self-study and submitted to QAC on 29 January 2018. A Mutual Briefing was held on 27-28 March 2018 which provided an opportunity for CityU to brief Members of the Audit Panel (the Panel) on the context of the University's SD operations.

The Panel visited CityU from 29 to 31 May 2018. They met the President and the senior team; heads and senior members of the Sub-degree Providing Units (SDPUs), SD programme leaders, full-time and part-time teaching staff, academic support services staff, full-time and part-time students, external stakeholders, members of governance committees, and representatives of the University of Wollongong (UoW).

The Panel evaluates:

- governance, management, university planning and accountability
- approach to programme quality assurance
- curriculum design, programme development and approval processes
- programme delivery, including pedagogical approaches, learning environments and resources, scheduling
- support for teaching quality, including pedagogical development
- student learning assessment
- student participation and student support services
- systems for acting on quality assurance data to make ongoing enhancements to student learning

and identifies its audit findings, including features of good practice worthy of commendation, recommendations for further consideration by the University, and affirmation of progress with actions already in place as a result of its self-study.

Introduction to the University

CityU was founded in 1984 as City Polytechnic of Hong Kong. It acquired independent degree-awarding powers in 1986 and University status in 1994. There are currently around 20 000 students and 1 000 academic staff in Science, Engineering, Energy, Environment, Veterinary Medicine, Life Sciences, Data Science, Business, Law, Creative Media, Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. The University has a primary focus on professional education and research and aims to ensure that its students are

well prepared for employment, and to contribute to the economic and social development of Hong Kong. A brief history of the University is provided at Appendix A.

At CityU, SD programmes are delivered in both UGC-funded and self-financed modes. UGC-funded programmes are administered by the College of Science and Engineering (CSE), while self-financed programmes are operated by the Community College of City University (CCCU) and the School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE). There are currently around 9 000 students studying on SD programmes ranging from part-time professional and continuing education programmes to Diplomas and Associate Degrees (ADs). The greater majority of students are based in the CCCU.

1. GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1.1 The University's Council, Court and Senate, together, carry ultimate responsibility for the governance of CityU. The Council is the supreme governing body, and delegates authority for academic matters to Senate, which has broad representation from all academic units and student bodies. Its remit includes: planning, developing, maintaining and discontinuing academic programmes; directing and regulating teaching and research; prescribing the admission requirements; regulating examinations; and awarding degrees and other academic recognition. The President oversees all academic and management functions and chairs the President's Cabinet (comprising the Chief-of-Staff, the Vice-Presidents and the Provost), the Management Board and the Senate.
- 1.2 SD programmes are delivered in both UGC-funded and self-financed modes by three SDPUs. The three Units have very different governance and management structures, offering a varied range of programmes and attracting different types of students. However, CityU states that it treats all components of its academic portfolio strategically, as a single system, overseen by the Senate, a unity of vision that is reflected in a common quality standard and quality oversight body having diverse implementation mechanisms for a wide spectrum of programmes and awards. It states that the missions of all three SDPUs align with the University's commitment to excellence in professional education.
- 1.3 CSE provides UGC-funded AD programmes in Architectural Studies, Building Services Engineering, Construction Engineering and Management, and Surveying. As a fully integrated component of the University, CSE has a standard committee structure and follows established operating lines. The College has a committee structure within which the first line of management of learning and teaching is the Programme Committee, reporting to the College Board and thence to Senate.

- 1.4 There are nine academic departments and one division. The Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering offers both SD and degree programmes at undergraduate (Ug) and postgraduate (Pg) levels. The Division of Building Science and Technology only offers ADs. In total, CSE offers four AD programmes with 432 UGC-allocated students. CityU's long-term development plan is to seek Government approval to convert these AD student places to first year degree places.
- 1.5 SCOPE currently delivers 21 SD programmes at Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) Level 4 or below. Its provision is closely aligned with the requirements of local business and the community, and responds to market demand and societal needs. For management and resource issues, SCOPE reports to the Provost. Its governing body is the School Board, which is chaired by the Provost or his nominee. The School Board oversees strategic, academic and financial matters. It reports to Senate on academic matters through the Academic Policy Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee. SCOPE's long-term strategy is to concentrate resources on high-quality programmes in niche areas, responding in particular to the needs of professional bodies, business and industry.
- 1.6 CCCU is an independent entity and a wholly-owned subsidiary of the University. It operates under University statute 13 and delivers 29 self-financed AD and diploma programmes. Its Board of Management oversees its operations and reports to the CityU Council. Its Executive Committee reports to the Board of Management on non-academic matters, and its Academic Board has delegated authority from the Senate to oversee all aspects of its programmes and courses. It reports to the Senate on SD provision through the Academic Policy Committee and Quality Assurance Committee. CCCU also has its own Validation and Monitoring Committee, and its own Programme Revalidation Panel.
- 1.7 CCCU aspires to be Hong Kong's leading private non-profit university that prepares graduates for lifelong learning, educates future leaders and enriches lives. In 2009-10, the University Council considered a number of strategic options for the future development of CCCU. It was agreed to search for a partner organisation that would facilitate the diversification of the College's provision and secure its financial position. The proposal received support from the majority of College staff. Following a search to find the best partner, CityU signed an agreement with the UoW, Australia in 2015. Under the agreement, CCCU will transfer to UoW over a five-year period, with the final cohort of students studying for a CityU award entering in 2018. The transfer will complete in 2020. The whole process is being managed by a Transition Committee, with membership drawn from UoW and CityU.
- 1.8 It is clear that the three SDPUs also have different relationships with the University. CSE is a fully integrated sub-unit of CityU; SCOPE has a degree

of independence and autonomy; and CCCU is fully independent, setting its own strategy, managing its own programmes, and reporting on decisions and actions to the University.

- 1.9 CityU's Quality Assurance Committee has played a crucial role in the governance and management structure. It reviews and provides feedback to the Annual Quality Reports of CCCU and SCOPE, and refers the Annual Reports to Senate via the Academic Policy Committee for approval. CSE does not submit an independent annual quality assurance report in the same way as SCOPE and CCCU. CSE's annual consolidated college report is received and deliberated by the Board of Undergraduate Studies and the Quality Assurance Committee (as described in Section 2).
- 1.10 The environment for the SD sector within Hong Kong is ever changing, and the future development of CityU's SD programmes will be highly affected by factors that may not be within the University's control. The three SDPUs have different structures and a degree of autonomy in the management of their responsibilities. All follow University procedures and regulations and all report to the Senate. However, management structures differ and the level of oversight by Senate is relatively limited and focused on identified exceptions. Scrutiny of annual reports takes place at local management boards and at the Quality Assurance Committee. The Panel looked closely at the plans for the transition of CCCU to the UoW and received assurances that the process was being handled with due regard to the interests of students, staff and key stakeholders. The Panel affirms the steps that have been taken by both institutions to ensure an effective handover of responsibilities.

2. APPROACH TO PROGRAMME QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 2.1 CityU confirms that proven quality assurance (QA) mechanisms are in place to protect the academic standards of institutional awards which includes the adoption of common measures across SDPUs to ensure consistency in academic quality. The University's stated goal is to continue to raise standards and enhance the quality of SD work by an unremitting focus on student experience, teaching quality, campus ambience, learning resources and societal relevance in line with its strategic priorities.
- 2.2 CCCU and SCOPE each have delegated responsibility for management of their own QA. CityU provides oversight through the receipt of an annual QA report to the Senate via the Academic Policy Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee.
- 2.3 CSE is subject to established University procedures, including annual performance-based reviews, but does not submit a separate QA report. The SD programmes in CSE are required to follow CityU's Academic Regulations for Associate Degrees, which mirror those of the University's degree programmes.

The QA principles, policies and practices are those of the University and the SD students are bound by the College's academic regulations.

- 2.4 The QA framework of CCCU, to which the SD programmes are subject, derived from the CityU Quality Manual and is, therefore, closely aligned to it. It is articulated in the College's QA document. The annual QA report that the College submits to Senate includes SD programme development, changes to academic policies, the assurance of academic quality and standards, and summary information on admission, graduation, and graduate exit survey results.
- 2.5 SCOPE also manages its SD operations in alignment with the University's QA procedures, which apply to all taught programmes leading to awards of the University, and its students are subject to Academic Regulations for Continuing Education Programmes Leading to SCOPE Award. SCOPE also submits an annual QA report to the Senate, although with a different content to that of the CCCU.
- 2.6 Data on the student experience of learning is gathered through online Teaching and Learning Questionnaires (TLQs), Staff-Student Consultative Committees and Programme Committees. CityU attaches considerable significance to external benchmarking mechanisms, including the External Academic Advisor (EAA) scheme, professional accreditation, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications' accreditation and the 5-year Review of Academic Excellence. CCCU appoints EAAs to help maintain the international standard of its awards. They report to the Academic Board.
- 2.7 External accreditation of the overseas collaboration programmes of SCOPE by a number of local and overseas accreditation agencies and professional bodies ensures that academic standards are maintained. In CSE, external benchmarking is provided by the Departmental Advisory Committee, whose membership includes industrial executives, professional leaders and government officials. The committee provides comments on curriculum development, teaching and industry training.
- 2.8 All three SDPUs have periodic review and revalidation of the programmes they deliver, though the cycles vary. In CCCU, programmes are reviewed every six years, in SCOPE the cycle is four years, and in CSE, five years.
- 2.9 The University's claim that QA mechanisms are in place to protect the academic standard of institutional awards is supported by the evidence reviewed. The audit trails show that each individual SDPU meets the requirements, although there are variations in approach between the different Units.

- 2.10 Each SDPU reports ultimately to the Senate, though the nature of the reports, and the routes they follow on their way to the Senate differs. Scrutiny of the papers of the Senate and its sub-committees show that the annual quality reports from CCCU and SCOPE are received by the Quality Assurance Committee and deliberated at that point. From there the reports proceed on to Academic Policy Committee and then on to Senate. The reports are not normally discussed in detail at these committees. CSE, however, does not submit an independent annual QA report on its SD provision. Its consolidated college report is received and deliberated by the Board of Undergraduate Studies. The report goes on to Quality Assurance Committee, but committee papers show that there is normally no further detailed discussion of the report at Quality Assurance Committee, or any higher-level committee.
- 2.11 While each of the three SDPUs report ultimately to the Senate, there is no evidence that all three reports are deliberated by the same institutional body. Though this does not pose an immediate risk to the academic quality or standards of any of the SDPUs, and does not imply that the systems in place for quality and standards are in any way deficient, it does mean that the University is missing opportunities for comparative analysis and sharing of experience and good practice. While recognising that this will become less important as CityU streamlines its SD provision, the University is recommended to establish a process to ensure that the quality and standards of each of the SDPUs is considered on, at least, an annual basis, by the same institutional body.
- 2.12 The practices and procedures followed by each of the SDPUs are appropriate, effective and compliant with University requirements, although with some differences in application reflecting the different nature of the programmes involved. The processes are managed within the governance structure of each Unit. The Quality Assurance Committee receives information about the outcomes of QA procedures. However, there is only limited evidence of the identification of good practice or the sharing of experience by the Committee to promote quality enhancement.

3. CURRICULUM DESIGN, PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESSES

- 3.1 The University utilises a framework approach to the design, development and approval of programmes. This allows some variation between the three SDPUs to reflect the unique nature of the provision. Policies and guidelines for programme design, development and approval have therefore been established which allow interpretation by each Unit. However, a clear set of broad criteria underpin the programme development policy which steers programme developers and the approval process and there are common procedures for course and programme approval which are overseen by Senate.

- 3.2 The Panel tested the effectiveness of the University's processes for curriculum design, development and approval through the examination of documents including quality documentation, audit trails, committee papers and annual quality reports; and meetings with senior managers, teachers, committee members, external stakeholders and students. The most recent SD programme to have completed the University's approval processes is the Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing developed by SCOPE, which was the subject of an audit trail selected by the Panel.
- 3.3 The SDPUs are required to conform to uniform standards which are founded on three pillars: that learning outcomes are aligned with the institutional mission and graduate attributes; that there is explicit consideration by external stakeholders; and that benchmarking of programmes is undertaken against international standards. The University states that it has widely adopted the pedagogical concepts of Outcomes-Based Teaching and Learning (OBTL) and Discovery-enriched Curriculum (DEC) which are used to shape SD provision within the parameters of the two-year study period.
- 3.4 The University utilises a two-stage process for programme planning and approval, each requiring Senate approval. Stage one focuses on programme planning, including the design and development of the programme and market demand analysis to inform the programme proposal. The outline proposal is reviewed against community needs, strategic considerations, academic merit, quality of outcomes, and optimization of resources. Additionally, input from internal and external stakeholders and benchmarking against appropriate local and international standards are required. The University has identified nine criteria for successful Senate approval at stage one.
- 3.5 Stage two is the detailed approval stage. Committee structures within each SDPU ensure that the required eight criteria are considered and addressed. SD programmes are required to meet the Generic Level Descriptors for Level 3 (Diplomas) or Level 4 (Higher Diplomas (HDs) and ADs) of the HKQF and the Common Descriptors of HD or AD Programmes (as applicable) prescribed by the Education Bureau. A new programme proposal must demonstrate how programme intended learning outcomes (PILOs) address academic standards, professional competencies and industry requirements. Programmes should be benchmarked appropriately against local and international frameworks, as well as meeting market demand and the University's strategic priorities and mission.
- 3.6 The criteria employed at the proposal and approval stages are also utilised for programme changes with a clear distinction between minor changes, which can be approved at Unit level, and major changes that require committee approval. Annual reporting facilitates quality monitoring of SD programmes and utilises rich sources of data to underpin reflection and action planning. Additionally, Assessment Panels, incorporating EAAs, play a significant role in monitoring student performance. They also offer advice on benchmarking against

international standards and industry requirements that feeds into programme development.

- 3.7 Senate provides oversight of the processes leading to the design, development and approval of programmes. Responsibilities are appropriately devolved to committees within each SDPU. Differences exist in the mechanisms that lead to the approval of new programmes and programme changes across the three SDPUs but these are within the parameters established by the institutional policy statements.
- 3.8 The Panel saw evidence of how the details of the University's quality requirements operate in practice. The variability permitted by the framework approach, in terms of the volume and detail of documentation and differing deliberative pathways to Senate, was observed across the three SDPUs. There was clear evidence of well-developed links with staff in other institutions, employers and external stakeholders. The high value the University places on their contribution to the design and delivery of the SD programmes was evident through the use of EAAs and External Professional Advisors (EPAs). Additionally, the Panel was able to verify the engagement of students in decision-making and consultation exercises leading to changes in programmes. It is apparent that actions from annual reports and external recommendations are implemented.
- 3.9 The audit trails provided confirmation of programme re-design and re-validation for two programmes and new programme design and approval for the Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing. These detailed audit trails illustrate a range of features including how consultation with the professions contributes to programme design, where international practice is taken into account during the design phase, the relationship between accreditation and internal validation, and how programmes have developed over time. They also show that changes have met the quality requirements adopted by the University and that QA of work placements is a feature of the programmes. It is apparent that there is an alignment between the AD outcomes and graduate attributes in some programmes, although not all attributes are clearly articulated.
- 3.10 The Panel noted the high degree of attention and investment by the University in programme design and approval, and accreditation and re-validation. However, although there is clarity around the approval of minor and major programme changes and the various associated roles and responsibilities, a lighter touch is generally employed through annual monitoring, that may result in incremental change of PILOs. This could be mitigated at SCOPE where triennial periodic programme reviews complement annual reporting procedures. Notwithstanding this, the University is recommended to consider how oversight of programme monitoring could most effectively guard against the possibility of progressive changes to the intended programme learning outcomes.

- 3.11 The University is strongly focused on the success of graduates and confirms the security of its academic standards through the evidence of student achievement. Over-arching expectations are defined by pedagogical design through OBTL and the DEC and through the stated Graduate Attributes, although the Panel found only limited reference to these in the detailed course and programme learning outcomes. CSE is the only SDPU which has incorporated DEC fully into their curriculum. CCCU's adoption of DEC is embedded in the design of General Education Courses.
- 3.12 The vocational nature of SD programmes is highly valued by the University and by employers, and is embedded through placements and internships. An Employers Guide has been created to ensure a quality experience. The personal development of the student is also valued and co-curricular activities are in place and financial support is available. A handbook for clinical placement is provided to students of Advanced Diploma in Veterinary Nursing that includes a broad range of practical advice on study skills, learning outcomes and assessment. The Panel acknowledges the thorough engagement of industry and professional specialists in the design and detail of programme delivery and affirms the QA measures that are attached to the clinical placements.
- 3.13 The Panel also confirms that processes for the design, development and approval of programmes are effective and operate in accordance with the University's policies and guidelines. The representation of industry and professional practitioners in programme design is a strength and assists the University to ensure graduates are fully prepared for employment. There is a robust approach to programme design and approval. Comparable attention to the continual re-development and improvement of courses, to safeguard the overall PILOs, would be of benefit.

4. PROGRAMME DELIVERY, INCLUDING PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES, LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND RESOURCES, SCHEDULING

- 4.1 The University states that it is committed to regular monitoring and reviewing of its academic units in accordance with University-wide processes and that its SDPUs have comprehensive mechanisms to monitor academic standards and operations to protect the academic standard of institutional awards. For example, by adopting common measures across SDPUs to ensure consistency in academic quality.
- 4.2 The University espouses an OBTL pedagogy and has adopted a DEC approach to programme design and delivery. Core competencies are stated as critical for associate graduates as they are for their more senior counterparts. The use of information technology (IT) systems and e-learning are seen as contributing to

the provision of a technologically-advanced and pedagogically-rich learning and teaching environment for both students and staff.

- 4.3 Based on the documentation provided, the Panel tested the effectiveness of the University's mechanisms for the monitoring of programme practices and delivery and for pedagogical approaches across the programmes. It also considered learning resources, learning environments, and e-learning and the student learning experience. The Panel met with teaching staff of SD programmes, representatives of academic support services, external advisors, employers and alumni and full-time and part-time students and visited facilities at Kowloon Tong, Admiralty and Telford campuses.
- 4.4 In terms of monitoring of OBTL delivery and pedagogies, programme leaders provide guidance and monitor the OBTL practice for new and existing teaching staff. Office of Education Development and Gateway Education (EDGE) provides some online courses on OBTL and teaching pedagogies which participants for the last two years were mainly from SCOPE and CSE. SCOPE has its own Part-time Lecturer Development Coordinator with the role of supporting and promoting staff development for part-time teaching staff and enhancing communication between the School and part-time teaching staff. CCCU itself provides pedagogical training and support to new and existing teaching staff on three levels: College, Divisional and Individual.
- 4.5 Guidelines on e-learning for teachers and students are available on the University website and training is provided to ensure that teachers are upskilled and well-supported in the use of e-learning platforms. Workshops on e-pedagogies (for example, flipped classroom and blended learning) are also offered by the Office of the Chief Information Officer.
- 4.6 Mechanisms to collect student feedback relating to programme delivery and other teaching and learning issues include: TLQs, Staff-Student Consultative Committee meetings and Interim Evaluation Questionnaire (CCCU). Programme leaders also regularly meet and discuss matters with students at class visit (SCOPE). The EAA and EPA system plays an important role in the periodic reviews. Evidence of inputs could be found in annual programme and divisional QA reports on a wide range of matters. The Panel commends the close working relationship between the external advisors and the SDPUs.
- 4.7 AD students at the Kowloon Tong campus have access to a range of learning resources, including library and IT facilities as well as other social provision such as swimming pools and student clubs and societies. The same level of provision is not available for the Telford and Admiralty campuses. Consequently, students on these campuses feel that they do not have equivalent access to resources. Student satisfaction data on virtual and physical learning environments are collected through a number of different surveys conducted at different times, including library surveys and graduate exit surveys. Feedback

on the use of the University's learning management system 'CANVAS' is collected by the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

- 4.8 The Panel confirmed that programme delivery monitoring mechanisms, including periodic re-accreditation and revalidation, annual QA reporting, divisional reports and feedback from external advisors, are all working well. It was also noted that OBTL is being practised by the SDPUs, as evidenced in the PILO mappings and discussions on PILO assessments in the annual reports. Evaluation of e-pedagogies had mainly been restricted to discussion forums, online quizzes, and materials uploaded onto CANVAS. However, it was apparent that the participation rate of teaching staff on courses about teaching pedagogies and OBTL, offered by EDGE, had been low for 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- 4.9 The University is encouraged to consider ways in which the annual QA reports from the SDPUs could be brought together to facilitate the sharing of good practice and the monitoring of provision across the range of different programmes. While there is evidence of the use of e-pedagogies, there is scope for the wider use of innovative teaching methods across the SDPUs. The Panel also recommends more comprehensive and systematic coordination in the collection of student data including various surveys of student opinions on their learning experience and expectations. Such data could be analysed, aggregated and integrated more effectively to enhance teaching and learning practices.

5. SUPPORT FOR TEACHING QUALITY, INCLUDING PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The oversight of teaching quality for all SD operations rests with the University's Quality Assurance Committee. Policies and procedures are articulated at SDPUs to guide operations and to support its teaching staff to continue updating their knowledge and enhancing their skills. CSE adopts University policies and procedures; and most of them are also applicable to SCOPE. CCCU formulates its own policies and procedures by following the framework used by the University.
- 5.2 The Panel scrutinised relevant documents and information regarding staff development and the quality of teaching and also discussed these issues with senior management of CityU and its SDPUs, and with teaching staff and students. Full-time teaching staff of CSE and SCOPE are subject to the University's human resources policies and procedures, and CCCU has separate policies and procedures. The three SDPUs all have policies in place to encourage their staff to take part in professional development activities, including the provision of funding for staff for their participation in local and international conferences.

- 5.3 The Panel analysed the statistics of staff participation in professional development activities. In 2016/17, about 30% of CSE full-time teaching staff joined professional development activities for their respective fields, and a small number participated in pedagogy development activities organised by EDGE. There are currently seven ongoing teaching development grant projects that would benefit SD and other programmes of the College.
- 5.4 SCOPE organised a number of seminars for its staff in 2018 and its staff also joined online courses offered by EDGE. Teaching staff of SCOPE also actively participated in local and non-local conferences, workshops and fora of their respective fields.
- 5.5 At CCCU, professional development opportunities are available at College, Division and Individual levels. Two seminars were organised in 2017 at the College level with high participation rate and around 45% of full-time staff members were sponsored by CCCU to join professional enhancement activities of their respective fields in 2017.
- 5.6 A significant number of part-time teachers are engaged to teach SD programmes. Professional development opportunities are available for part-time staff including a new online course recently launched in 2017/18 by EDGE. In January 2018, SCOPE established the post of Part-time Lecturer Development Coordinator to support and promote staff development for part-time teaching staff and to enhance communication between the School and teachers. The Panel took note of this new initiative and encourages SCOPE to track its effectiveness and to share its experience with other SDPUs.
- 5.7 Professional development opportunities are independently offered to teaching staff of the three SDPUs. The Panel found evidence that staff members have made use of the funding to join activities that keep them updated about their respective fields of interest, but the levels of participation in teaching-related professional development activities vary across the different SDPUs and are generally very low. CityU is recommended to develop the role of the Quality Assurance Committee in the planning of professional development activities across the SDPUs and to consolidate the role of EDGE in leveraging opportunities at programme and SDPU level to produce synergy. It is also encouraged to seek ways of ensuring that more teaching staff from the SDPUs participate in the courses that it offers.
- 5.8 All SDPUs adopt the University's standardised TLQ as the primary tool for evaluating the performance of teaching staff. Peer review is also used for formative and summative evaluation of teaching quality. CityU claims that both the University and CCCU have developed clear guidelines for conducting peer review, and a similar mechanism has been adopted by SCOPE for newly appointed part-time teachers.

- 5.9 Follow-up activities for teaching staff with low TLQ scores is governed by established practice rather than policy, and is the responsibility of academic leaders who also provide guidance for teaching improvement. Class visits are used to elicit student views particularly from part-time students. There is evidence showing that appropriate action for such cases has taken place and is monitored at different levels including by CityU's Quality Assurance Committee.
- 5.10 Peer observation of teaching is widely used in SCOPE and CCCU, and is perceived by most staff that the Panel met as a means of providing helpful feedback to staff to enhance teaching quality. The Panel reviewed a number of reports from SCOPE and CCCU, and found a variety of formats and review issues in the reports. Such variation is also observed in the reports for evaluating teachers of the same programme. The Panel commends the University for its approach to following-up cases of low TLQ scores and for monitoring the subsequent progress of staff. It also affirms the move towards developing targeted support options to address such cases.
- 5.11 The practice in CSE is different where peer review of teaching is optional and viewed largely as a development exercise. According to the guidelines for the Peer Review of Teaching, peer review is required for staff of CSE and SCOPE upon major personnel decisions such as contract renewal, substantiation or promotion. However, in practice, the Panel understands that staff members perceive peer review as an optional activity. CityU may find it helpful to clearly communicate its peer review requirements to its staff and to clarify the review criteria, particularly when the outcomes of review may have a bearing on staff retention and promotion.
- 5.12 CityU aligns teaching performance with rewards, and pay rises are performance-related. A scheme with transparent assessment criteria is applicable to teaching staff from CSE and to full-time staff of SCOPE. At CCCU also, the percentage of annual bonus and salary increments upon contract renewal are contingent on performance as reflected in performance appraisals. A set of Guidance Notes for Appraisers and Appraisees is in place. Not all teaching staff that the Panel met were fully aware of the link between salary and teaching performance, although some could perceive the indirect effect through staff appraisal. Teaching awards are also used as a way of recognising and celebrating good teaching.
- 5.13 The grading system in the performance appraisal of CCCU comprises four levels ranging from exceeding required standards to failing to meet required standards. The standards are developed and agreed within Divisions prior to the appraisal cycle. CCCU is recommended to ensure that all staff are familiar with the assessment criteria and assessment rubrics for staff performance appraisal and ensure that they are fully aware of the expectations for

professional standards of teaching and of the impact their performance may have on their remuneration.

6. STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 CityU's approach to assessment is outcomes-based and criterion-referenced. The University's regulations ensure that all students in the SDPUs are fairly and consistently assessed and that appropriate criteria are defined and communicated to students. Intended programme learning outcomes are linked to specific assessment strategies. Each course is required to map its intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and assessment tasks against other comparable programmes to ensure alignment.
- 6.2 Arrangements for assessment are defined in the University's Assessment Policy and Principles for Taught Programmes. The Policy clearly defines roles and responsibilities of Heads of academic units who are responsible for the implementation of appropriate procedures to address the requirements of specific SD programmes. It specifies all aspects of assessment, including the definition of roles and responsibilities, the formulation of assessment criteria and grade descriptors, the benchmarking of requirements against international standards, procedures relating to the late submission of assessment tasks, marking and grading procedures, preparation and security of examination papers, assessment moderation and feedback to students.
- 6.3 The Panel considered the effectiveness and consistency of the student assessment by studying relevant documentation provided by the University and by the SDPUs. It also had access to a representative sample of student portfolios for a range of SD programmes, as well as information available on the University's website. The Panel met and discussed assessment issues with academic leaders, SD programme leaders, teaching staff, alumni and full-time and part-time students of the different SDPUs.
- 6.4 The University's Assessment Policy is consistent, adequate and aligned to the objectives of all the three SDPUs. The Units operate within the framework of University's Assessment Policy, although there are some differences between them with regard to the types of programmes offered, the mode of assessment and the requirements of employers and professional organisations. For example, the practices on moderation, internal or external, of assessment tasks to assure validity and reliability of assessment decisions vary between the Units and between divisions. Other practices such as the use of grade analysis reports are only widely used in CSE.
- 6.5 The Panel noted evidence of the link between ILOs and assessment requirements and had confirmation from staff, alumni and employers that learning outcomes were being achieved. However, there is scope for further development in individual programmes and for the collection and analysis of

systematic information about outcomes, making use of existing graduate employment and exit surveys. Such information would be helpful for monitoring SD provision and for the processes of programme development and review. As noted in paragraph 4.9 above, the Panel proposes that steps are taken to improve the gathering and analysis of attainment data, through the existing mechanisms, and that the outcomes are reported to SDPU Boards and to Quality Assurance Committee.

- 6.6 In discussions with students and alumni, and the review of student portfolios, it became clear to the Panel that appropriate information is provided about course outlines, assessment requirements, timing and criteria. The Panel concluded that within the SDPUs the students learning assessment is fair and consistent although some workload problems are detected in specific programmes. In addition, it was noted that the feedback to students is generally provided, although more feedback is requested on final examinations.
- 6.7 CityU is committed to maintaining robust and rigorous procedures with regard to academic integrity and measures are in place to ensure that students are fully aware of the University's expectations and of the consequences of academic misconduct, including cheating and plagiarism. The University makes use of software tools such as 'Turnitin' to identify cases of plagiarism and students are required to sign a statement of authenticity when they submit coursework for assessment. Students confirmed that the policy is well publicised and understood. The CityU Academic Conduct Committee has carried out a review of the current system and is considering ways of further strengthening the current arrangements.
- 6.8 Regulations for managing complaints and appeals against the outcomes of assessment are in place, although not always well recognised by students. Most issues are dealt with informally by teaching staff and programme leaders. Arrangements for referral of cases to a more formal procedure are not widely known. Although students of CCCU and SCOPE are not covered by the CityU Student Complaint Procedures, the two SDPUs have their own separate procedures. The Panel recommends the University to consider its policy for student complaints and appeals to make sure that all students are fully aware of the existing arrangements and to confirm equity of treatment for students, regardless of their programme of study. The University should also collect and analyse information about complaints and appeals to report to SDPU Boards and Quality Assurance Committee.
- 6.9 The SDPUs regularly gather a variety of data relating to student learning assessment through student surveys, grade analysis reports and reports from EAAs. The information is used to ensure consistency of practice and to add value to the quality of the student learning experience. The Panel encourages the University to enhance the standardisation and comparability of information on the conduct of assessment to allow for greater institutional oversight.

- 6.10 Overall, the Panel concluded that the University's policies and procedures to assess student learning are fair and consistent in all three SDPUs. Assessment tasks are linked to ILOs and students are familiar with the criteria for assessment. The University has a robust policy with regard to academic honesty that is well publicised and understood by students and there are appropriate checks in place to identify plagiarism in coursework. However, there is scope to improve the collection and analysis of information about assessment more generally, to ensure consistency of practice and a need to consider the more formal aspects of the complaints and appeals procedures.

7. STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- 7.1 The University is committed to promoting student engagement and whole-person well-being through the provision of dedicated support services which include counselling, physical education, sports programmes, career and learning services. These support services are offered by different groups in each SDPU. Particular attention is paid to improving the English proficiency of SD students, including the provision of a number of out-of-classroom activities. CSE offers the Cultural and Language Immersion Scheme for its SD students. Assistance is provided for non-local students from the Mainland and Southeast Asian countries through the implementation of services to facilitate their integration into the CityU learning community.
- 7.2 The Panel considered the effectiveness of student support services, by reviewing relevant documentation and through discussion with representative groups of students, staff from the support services, programme leaders and alumni. It also visited facilities at the main campus (Kowloon Tong), at SCOPE (Admiralty) and CCCU (Telford).
- 7.3 Students at CSE have full access to the services provided on the main campus, whereas the facilities at SCOPE and CCCU are more limited. Provision at CCCU, such as overseas study tours, are generally well regarded by the students and are seen to be relevant and beneficial for their programmes of study. However, there is scope for enhancing other provision on the Telford campus including additional space for independent work, and WiFi access. Students at SCOPE considered the services to be appropriate and accessible, although the use of services is quite low, particularly by part-time students. The library resources are limited in comparison to the main campus and students do not have the benefit of access to health services or membership of clubs and societies (see also paragraph 4.7 above).
- 7.4 To complement the academic programme, soft skills are developed through workshops, overseas study tours, cultural exchanges, and a Cultural and Language Immersion Scheme. CSE owns an e-learning platform that is used as

a depository for digital course materials for SD programmes to enrich and encourage engagement with the discipline. The University states that the value of DEC in ADs has been recognised through funding and awards and student achievement. The Panel saw evidence in the development of programmes of the ways the University uses feedback from employers to embed a competency-based approach to programme delivery and address the requirements of professional organisations.

- 7.5 There is evidence that students are well prepared for placement and internships. In 2016/17, nearly 20% of students (over 1 400) gained first-hand practical experience through internships with over 150 partner organisations and the University acknowledges that there is scope to enhance this level of participation in future. The Panel heard that employers particularly value the experience that students gain through work placement opportunities. For part-time students unable to engage with these opportunities, guest industry speakers are included in the programme. The Panel commends the University and its employer partners for the management of student placements and internships.
- 7.6 CityU encourages student participation in governance at University level and through the different organisational structures in each SDPU. Involvement is evidenced by the membership of student representatives on key University committees, including the Council and Senate, where representation is from the President and senior officers of the CityU Students' Union. There are no specific arrangements for ensuring representation from SD students, although they are eligible to participate. Students at SCOPE do not have the same status and are not currently involved in University level committees.
- 7.7 Student representatives on course committees are either elected or identified through discussions in classes and receive briefing about their role from programme leaders. Students meet regularly with staff in Staff-Student Consultative Committees and Programme Committees.
- 7.8 The University encourages student participation in co-curricular activities, although the numbers involved are not as high as might be expected. Financial sponsorship is available to both UGC-funded and self-financed AD students. The Panel found evidence in different annual reports in each SDPU that supports the effective monitoring and improvement of co-curricular activities and internships, including evaluation reports and self-improvement and reflection sheets. The Panel recommends that the University give further encouragement to students to participate in co-curricular activities and keep a comprehensive record of all student involvement.
- 7.9 The University provides a range of support services to assist students with their studies and career development. The services provided by the SDPUs are generally well received by students, particularly the internship opportunities

and the study abroad scheme, although the take-up rate for other services is low. Students are also well supported by employers during work placements. The participation of students in governance is similar to the arrangements in other institutions, but with scope for more involvement of SD students.

8. SYSTEMS FOR ACTING ON QUALITY ASSURANCE DATA TO MAKE ONGOING ENHANCEMENTS TO STUDENT LEARNING

- 8.1 The University places importance on student evaluation of learning opportunities for reflection on the quality of student learning. The three SDPUs conduct teaching evaluations using a shared calibrated questionnaire and gather information from the deliberations of the Staff-Student Consultative Committees and Programme Committees. Monitoring of QA data and plans for enhancement are included in annual programme reports.
- 8.2 Responsibility for the oversight of student learning and teaching quality within SD programmes resides with the Quality Assurance Committee, following scrutiny by the Programme Committee, relevant academic units and College or School Boards. Additionally an annual QA report is submitted to Senate by SCOPE and by CCCU.
- 8.3 The University claims that it provides a ‘technologically-advanced and pedagogically-rich’ learning and teaching environment which incorporates e-learning. To enable student planning, the University publishes a master schedule for classes for the full year and part-time opportunities are available at weekends and evenings. Class scheduling for CSE and CCCU is managed by the Academic Regulations and Records Office. In SCOPE, the schedules are designed to avoid difficulties from teaching at two learning centres.
- 8.4 The Panel tested the effectiveness of the ways the University ensures the quality of the student learning experience, with a particular focus on the reflection and follow-through phase, through scrutiny of documentation, including committee minutes and papers, and meetings with key staff, students and external stakeholders. In addition, the Panel reviewed the three audit trails provided, representing SD programmes from across the three SDPUs.
- 8.5 The University clearly acknowledges the importance of a systematic approach to data collection for enhancement purposes. There is a reliance on surveys at key points in the student journey to improve programme management and learning opportunities, and for confirming that the measures taken are working. Peer review of teaching and learning contributes to the evaluation of teaching quality. Constructive feedback is provided by stakeholders with a view to informing teaching practice and learning opportunities.
- 8.6 Each SDPU has a separate proforma for annual reporting. At the individual level, programme leaders monitor student progress and tailor action when

concerns are noted. The Head of each academic unit has responsibility for creating an appropriate learning and teaching environment and programme leaders and course leaders take operational responsibilities at programme and course level respectively. It is not clear how actions in response to individual student problems are reported or feed into overall programme enhancement. Trend data on student admission, enrolment and completion is supplemented with feedback data gathered in multiple surveys and through student and employer consultation. The Panel affirms the University's commitment to ensure improved use of data collection and analysis through quarterly reporting and by working with data owners to develop learning analytics.

- 8.7 Programme teams develop action plans in response to analysis of quality and trend data, emergent issues and subsequent actions. The action plans, along with a review of quality metrics are captured within the annual reporting template. Systematic quality enhancement is achieved through an expectation that programme leaders will monitor trends and reflect on issues of significance. The follow-up of identified quality issues is the responsibility of the Head of academic unit. External stakeholders and EAAs are able to input into the quality reporting processes thus contributing to programme enhancements. The Panel affirms the measures proposed by the University to strengthen the procedures for the follow-through of programme quality reports for the benefit of student learning experience.
- 8.8 The SDPUs are responsible for reviewing the viability of programmes, based on student intake and completion data. The Units make recommendations for the discontinuation of a programme to Senate, the CCCU Academic Board or the SCOPE School Board. The performance of SD programmes is not only assessed in terms of the quality of provision and the student experience, but also in terms of financial sustainability and market need. The University adopts a measured and well-informed approach to making decisions about the continuation of under-performing programmes.
- 8.9 Overall the Panel concluded that the University is committed to ensuring high quality student learning and that initiatives are driven by the collection and analysis of data and feedback. Enhancements to learning opportunities benefit from the input of professional and industry specialists and student feedback. However, as noted earlier in this report, the Panel has suggested that the University should take a more systematic approach to data collection and analysis to reduce the potential for survey fatigue and to maximise the institutional benefit of feedback for the SD programmes (see also paragraphs 4.9 and 6.5 above). Consolidation of the range of employment-based and soft-skills initiatives to improve take-up of opportunities will also be beneficial.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The University's strategic plan makes clear its overall commitment to the pursuit of excellence in research and professional education. To realise this ambition, it recognises the need to enhance quality, strengthen performance, improve campus space and facilities, reduce student enrolment, consolidate programmes and progress internationalisation. In the light of an increasingly competitive market for SD provision, and advice from UGC to separate community college operations from the parent institutions, the University is taking stock of its current programmes and looking at alternative arrangements for the management of SD operations.
- 9.2 The most significant development is the transfer of CCCU to the UoW, a process that is currently in progress. But the University is also seeking approval to convert its ADs in CSE to Ug degree programmes and at ways of developing the position of SCOPE.
- 9.3 Currently the management of SD operations is largely devolved to CCCU and SCOPE, which operate as separate entities within the University's structure. SD activity in CSE is treated as an integral part of the College's academic portfolio. Oversight by senior University committees, particularly Senate, is at a high level, providing assurance about academic standards and compliance with University requirements. Operational matters are managed within the governance structures of the individual Units.
- 9.4 The evidence seen by the Panel confirms that, despite differences in the structure and organisation of the SDPUs and variations in the application of University policies and procedures, the SD programmes are fit for purpose and are meeting the expectations of students, employers and other stakeholders. The University has an over-riding commitment to address the needs of the Hong Kong economy, society and community.
- 9.5 Students studying for SD qualifications are appreciative of the support they receive from teaching staff and from the academic support services. The Panel identified good working relations within each of the SDPUs and support for students to succeed in their chosen fields of employment or further study.

APPENDIX A: CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG (CITYU) *[Information provided by the University]*

History

City University of Hong Kong (CityU), founded in 1984 as City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, initially providing only sub-degree (SD) programmes. CityU was granted university status in 1994. Today, the University confers taught/research postgraduate, professional doctorate, bachelor, and SD awards, with large majority at undergraduate (Ug) and postgraduate (Pg) levels.

The three Units offering SD programmes are:

- a. College of Science and Engineering (CSE)
The only college offering SD programmes. It is home to nine academic departments and one division.
- b. Community College of City University (CCCU)
A wholly owned subsidiary and company limited by guarantee established in 2004. It has been a leading provider of self-financed associate degrees (ADs). CCCU will be transferred to the University of Wollongong in 2020.
- c. School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE)
Established in 1991 as a continuing extension arm of the University. It provides life-long education for professional practice, retraining and self-development; and supporting career advancement.

Vision and Mission

CityU (covering also CSE)

Vision: CityU aspires to become a leading global university, excelling in research and professional education.

Mission: To nurture and develop the talents of students and to create applicable knowledge in order to support social and economic advancement.

CCCU

Vision: CCCU aspires to be Hong Kong's leading private non-profit university that prepares graduates for lifelong learning, educates future leaders and enriches lives.

Mission: To excel in teaching and learning and community engagement, serving Hong Kong and the region. The College seeks to nurture students' intellectual growth, creativity, integrity, and global outlook and

empowers them to contribute their talents to society.

SCOPE

Vision: SCOPE aspires to be a leading school in professional and life-long education.

Mission: To provide quality life-long education for professional practice, retraining and self-development which anticipates and responds to community needs as well as social and technological changes.

Role Statement

CityU:

- (a) offers a range of professionally oriented programmes leading to the award of first degrees, and a small number of sub-degree programmes;
- (b) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (c) offers a number of taught postgraduate programmes and research postgraduate programmes in selected subject areas particularly in professional and applied fields;
- (d) emphasises application-oriented teaching, professional education and applied research;
- (e) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength;
- (f) emphasises high value-added educational programmes for whole person development and professional competencies and skills;
- (g) maintains strong links with business, industry, professional sectors, employers as well as the community;
- (h) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (i) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (j) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

Programmes of Study offered by Sub-degree Providing Units

CSE offers over 40 programmes at SD, Ug and Pg/professional doctorate levels. Among them, four are UGC-funded AD programmes in architectural studies, building services engineering, construction engineering and management, and surveying.

CCCU is the major SD provider at CityU. It offers a wide range of self-financed AD programmes covering applied sciences and technology, business, languages and communication and social sciences. It also delivers a diploma programme, and the International Language Proficiency Tests with preparatory courses.

The self-financed programmes at SD level or below at SCOPE are available at certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, professional certificate and professional diploma levels. Programme duration ranges from 100 contact hours to two years. The School also provides degree, top-up degree and Pg programmes which lead to non-local awards with overseas universities. The SD provision accounts for a small part of SCOPE's programme portfolio.

Staff and Enrolment Numbers of Sub-degree Programmes

A breakdown of staff and programme enrolments in 2016/17 is as follows –

Sub-degree Providing Unit	Academic and Academic Supporting Staff Numbers		Programme Enrolment Numbers	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
CSE	36	8	903	0
CCCU	116	123	6 877	146
SCOPE	18	124	681	458

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT FINDINGS

City University of Hong Kong (CityU) sincerely thanks the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Committee (UGC), the Audit Panel, the Audit Co-ordinator and UGC colleagues for their professionalism, thoughtfulness and effort in completing the audit exercise. CityU values the UGC's detailed assessment of its sub-degree operations and its quality enhancement initiatives.

The academic programmes offered by CityU span a wide spectrum, including sub-degree, bachelor, taught and research postgraduate level and professional doctorates, with the large majority at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Sub-degree operations account for a small share of the University's portfolio. The University is nevertheless committed to assuring sub-degree quality by adopting the same quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms as for degree level and above, as far as it is practicable. Consequently, CityU appreciates the Audit Panel's recognition of the considerable differences in the structure and organisation of its sub-degree providing units (SDPUs), their governance and paths forward. Noting the differences, the Audit Panel saw evidence that the sub-degree programmes at CityU are "fit for purpose and meeting the expectations of students, employers and other stakeholders" and confirmed "the University's overriding commitment to the needs of the Hong Kong economy, society and community" (para. 9.4).

CityU is pleased that the Audit Panel commended the University for the close working relationship the SDPUs developed with their various stakeholders, including External Academic Advisors / External Professional Advisors, employers, professional bodies and other stakeholders in the areas of external benchmarking, curriculum design, programme delivery and placement and internship opportunities (paras. 4.6, 7.4, 7.5, summary #1, 7 and 8). The recognition is particularly encouraging for the programme teams who made concerted efforts to engage industry and professional specialists in the design and delivery of their programmes. The teams established a network with employers for the provision of placement and internship opportunities and used employer feedback to develop a competency-based programme delivery approach that addresses the requirements of professional organisations. CityU concurs with the Audit Panel that "representation of industry and professional practitioners in programme design is a strength and assists the University to ensure graduates are fully prepared for employment" (para. 3.13).

CityU has striven to adopt a robust approach to quality assurance and enhancement, placing strong emphasis on improving teaching and learning. The University therefore welcomes the Audit Panel's confirmation that the procedures for the periodic review of programmes were well established across the three SDPUs and that they involved constructive input from external participants (summary #4). The Audit Panel also commended the University's approach to handling cases where the evaluation indicated that improvements could be made (para. 5.10).

An outcomes-based teaching and learning approach has been embedded into the academic infrastructure of all SDPUs in CityU for numerous years. The University is thus pleased that the Audit Panel found evidence of the link between intended learning outcomes and assessment requirements, with confirmation from staff, alumni and employers that learning outcomes were being achieved (para. 6.5); and that the Audit Panel acknowledged the University's widespread adoption of the outcomes-based teaching and learning approach. CityU appreciates the Audit Panel's recognition of the University's commitment to ensure improved use of data collection and analysis and further development of learning analytics (para. 8.6). Sharing the Audit Panel's view, CityU agrees that a more comprehensive and systematic approach will help to better inform the University of teaching and learning enhancement.

Quality assurance at CityU is overseen and monitored by the University's Quality Assurance Committee. The University welcomes the Audit Panel's recommendation that the roles of the Quality Assurance Committee and Office of Education Development and Gateway Education be strengthened and consolidated with respect to sub-degree operations. For instance, the University intends to review the oversight of programme monitoring (para. 3.10), plan professional development activities, enhance the sharing of experiences across SDPUs, and task the Office of Education Development and Gateway Education to raise participation rates for staff development programmes of SDPUs (para. 5.7).

CityU agrees that ensuring staff and student awareness concerning existing quality assurance arrangements is important. The University therefore appreciates the Audit Panel's recommendations to strengthen SDPU communications accordingly, such as for the Student Complaints Procedure. While the procedure is well established in all SDPUs, students need to be made more aware of it. At the same time, a review of treatment equity for students of different SDPUs will also be beneficial (para. 6.8). Similarly, the Community College of CityU (CCCU) needs to ensure that all staff are familiar with the assessment criteria and assessment rubrics for staff performance and the University's corresponding expectations, plus the impact of these expectations on remuneration (para. 5.13).

This quality audit came at a time when the CCCU was in the process of being transferred to the University of Wollongong. The audit has given CityU a meaningful opportunity to review its approach, policies, implementation and practices for the sub-degree operations amidst this transition. The Audit Panel's advice is a valuable contribution to the further enhancement of the sub-degree programmes that remain, for which CityU is grateful.

APPENDIX C: ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMNS

AD	Associate Degree
CCCU	Community College of City University
CityU	City University of Hong Kong
CSE	College of Science and Engineering
DEC	Discovery-enriched Curriculum
EAA	External Academic Advisor
EDGE	Office of Education Development and Gateway Education
EPA	External Professional Advisor
HD	Higher Diploma
HKQF	Hong Kong Qualifications Framework
ILOs	Intended learning outcomes
IT	Information technology
OBTL	Outcomes-Based Teaching and Learning
Pg	Postgraduate
PILOs	Programme intended learning outcomes
QA	Quality assurance
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
SCOPE	School of Continuing and Professional Education
SD	Sub-degree
SDPU	Sub-degree Providing Unit
TLQ	Teaching and Learning Questionnaire
Ug	Undergraduate
UGC	University Grants Committee
UoW	University of Wollongong

APPENDIX D: CITYU AUDIT PANEL

The Audit Panel comprised the following:

Professor Jeremy Bradshaw (Panel Chair)
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International & Doctoral), University of Bath

Professor Martí Casadesús Fa
Director, AQU Catalunya (Agency for University Quality in Catalonia)

Dr Vicky Lee
Associate Head (Academic Development) of College of International Education,
Hong Kong Baptist University

Professor Isabella WY Poon
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Dr Stephanie Wilson
Higher Education Consultant
Former Director of Quality, University of London

Audit Co-ordinator

Dr Stephen Jackson
QAC Secretariat

APPENDIX E: QAC'S MISSION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

QAC was formally established in April 2007 as a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under the aegis of the UGC of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Mission

QAC's mission is:

- (a) To assure that the quality of educational experience in all programmes at the levels of sub-degree, first degree and above (however funded) offered in UGC-funded universities is sustained and improved, and is at an internationally competitive level; and
- (b) To encourage universities to excel in this area of activity.

Terms of Reference

QAC has the following terms of reference:

- (a) To advise UGC on quality assurance matters in the higher education sector in Hong Kong and other related matters as requested by the Committee;
- (b) To conduct audits and other reviews as requested by UGC, and report on the quality assurance mechanisms and quality of the offerings of universities;
- (c) To promote quality assurance in the higher education sector in Hong Kong; and
- (d) To facilitate the development and dissemination of good practices in quality assurance in higher education.

Membership (as at February 2019)

Mr Lincoln LEONG Kwok-kuen, JP (Chairman) Chief Executive Officer, MTR Corporation Limited

Professor Chetwyn CHAN Che-hin Associate Vice President (Learning and Teaching), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Professor Adrian K DIXON Emeritus Professor of Radiology, University of Cambridge

Mrs Belinda GREER Chief Executive Officer, English Schools Foundation

Dr Kim MAK Kin-wah, BBS, JP President, Caritas Institute of Higher Education and Caritas Bianchi College of Careers

Professor PONG Ting-chuen Professor of Computer Science and Engineering, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Professor Jan THOMAS Vice-Chancellor, Massey University

Dr Don F WESTERHEIJDEN Senior Research Associate, Center for Higher Education Policy Studies, University of Twente

Ex-officio Member

Professor James TANG Tuck-hong Secretary-General, UGC

Secretary

Miss Winnie WONG Ming-wai Deputy Secretary-General (1), UGC