

Report of a Quality Audit of Sub-degree Operations

of The Education University of Hong Kong



June 2019
Quality Assurance Council

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

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Sub-degree Operations of
The Education 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 https://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 The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK; 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 SD programmes at EdUHK are offered by the Department of Early Childhood Education (ECED; the Department) in the Faculty of Education and Human Development (FEHD; the Faculty) and are integrated with ECED's degree provision, with clear pathways for SD students to progress to higher levels of study. The SD provision is aligned with the strategic priorities of ECED, FEHD and the University and reflects EdUHK's vision, mission and core values in education. Governance and quality assurance (QA) of programmes in ECED are aligned with those in the Faculty and the University. The Audit Panel (the Panel) found that EdUHK has effective governance structures and procedures for setting and maintaining academic standards. Approval and review of SD programmes take into account the Generic Level Descriptors of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework, and academic standards are assured by benchmarking with internationally comparable levels and an outcomes-based approach to teaching and assessment.

2. *Approach to programme quality assurance*

EdUHK has a consistent and comprehensive approach to QA, which enables it to meet international standards and the professional requirements for its SD programmes. All SD programmes adhere to the University's QA policies and procedures, which are clearly set out in staff handbooks. The Panel found the University systematically collects, reviews and uses student outcome data and other Performance Indicators (PIs) to identify areas for improvement in Annual Programme Reports (APRs) and five-yearly periodic reviews. APRs are considered at Department and Faculty levels, with the Faculty Board (FB) reporting to the University's Academic Board on relevant approvals. The Panel found there was effective implementation and evaluation of action plans and effective responses to feedback from SD students, graduates, External Reviewers, employers and other stakeholders.

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

The University has created a robust framework for the development and approval of new programmes, involving appropriate checkpoints, consent points and externality. Documentation relating to the recent approval of the Diploma in Early Childhood Education programme confirmed that the University's expectations are followed explicitly and there is thorough appraisal by External Reviewers. Early in the process of programme development, Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) and admission requirements are specified. The PILOs are used to construct Course Intended Learning Outcomes which are in turn well-matched to the assessments, indicating clear constructive alignment within the programmes. In setting admission requirements, reference is made to the University's General Entrance Requirements for Sub-degree Programmes, a document that specifically references each of the three SD programmes. The ongoing appropriateness of admissions criteria is monitored by the relevant Programme Committee through the consideration of achievement data.

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

The Department, with Programme Co-ordinators and the Programme Leader playing key leadership roles, including at Programme Committees, systematically implements the University's approach in its monitoring of the quality of SD programme delivery. Both the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Handbook and the Department Handbook provide staff with clear guidance on the outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning as it applies to SD provision. The programmes utilise external input to monitor and benchmark approaches to both learning and academic standards. Readily accessible physical and e-learning environments are appreciated by students for their role in supporting learning. The practical experience at the Early Childhood Learning Centre is especially valued. In the context of the programmes' intensive vocational training, the

University and the Department seek to accommodate students' academic needs and facilitate their participation in co-curricular activities.

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

EdUHK's human resources policies relating to recruitment, induction, evaluation and professional development are routinely applicable to ECED staff delivering SD programmes. Mandatory training courses and a mentoring system operate for those academic staff new to learning and teaching in the Department. The Panel noted the comprehensive and tailored approach to the professional development of staff teaching SD programmes evident at Department, Faculty and University levels, with the Centre for Learning, Teaching and Technology playing a focal role. Teaching quality is effectively monitored using Student Evaluation of Teaching scores and follow-up actions are implemented as necessary. The level of staff retention is high.

6. *Student learning assessment*

EdUHK has a comprehensive and robust student assessment policy framework that is applied systematically to its SD programmes. Academic staff effectively implement guidance on use of assessment rubrics and grading as specified in the University's approach to Outcomes Based Assessment and the development of learning outcomes. The Student Handbook and course materials provide students with clear information on assessment processes, specific requirements for assignments, and avenues available for review of academic decisions. The University's policies for internal moderation, the use of External Examiners, ratification of grades by Departmental Assessment Panels and monitoring of students' overall performance by Boards of Examiners, are appropriately applied. Periodic Unit and Programme Reviews of SD programmes, along with input from External Reviewers, ensure that there is external benchmarking of assessment approaches. The University's academic honesty policy, including its zero-tolerance approach to plagiarism, is effectively applied. The Panel noted the systematic application and review of the University's comprehensive policy framework governing student learning assessment for SD programmes.

7. *Student participation and student support services*

SD students are encouraged to engage in university governance through their participation as members of FB, Staff-Student Consultative Meetings and the Early Childhood Education Students' Association, experience they find fruitful and informative. SD students value the support provided by the Academic Advising System and language enhancement services, as well as tailor-made workshops provided by the Student Affairs Office. They are also appreciative of experiential activities and non-local study tours which they feel enrich their learning. The University is seeking to provide more comprehensive support to those students studying away from the main Tai Po campus by offering bespoke

summer programmes and weekend co-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives at the Kowloon Tong and Tseung Kwan O Study Centres.

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

The University does not collect data where the focus is its SD provision. However, since the Sub-degree Providing Unit is a single Department and the SD provision comprises three programmes, the monitoring undertaken at the levels of Department and Programme provides adequate coverage of reflection and follow through activity for SD programmes. The University is responsive to its environment. The University makes good use of survey data and other data about its SD provision. This includes analysing temporal trends and making comparisons with other elements of the University's provision. The analysis is used in action planning to make improvements, particularly through APRs, which reference institutional Key Performance Indicators and PIs.

INTRODUCTION

Explanation of the audit methodology

This is the report of a quality audit of the sub-degree (SD) operations of The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK; 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 (IS) which was prepared by the University following a period of self-study and submitted to QAC on 20 June 2018. A Mutual Briefing was held on 30 August 2018 which provided an opportunity for EdUHK to brief Members of the Audit Panel (the Panel) on the context of the University's SD operations.

The Panel visited EdUHK from 30 to 31 October 2018. They met the President and the senior team; managers of SD provision, staff teaching on SD programmes, academic support services staff, external stakeholders including graduates, employers, External Examiner (EE) and External Reviewer, as well as full-time and part-time students.

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

The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) was established in 1994 and came under the aegis of the University Grants Committee (UGC) in 1996. Following a successful university title review in 2015, HKIEd was renamed The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) in May 2016. EdUHK is dedicated primarily to training and developing school teachers and educators in Hong Kong. A brief history of the University is provided at Appendix A.

The University's vision is to further enhance its role as a leading university in the Asia Pacific region and beyond, with a focus on educational research, development and innovation; its primary mission is to lead educational innovation and promote and support the strategic development of teaching, teacher education and disciplines complementary to education by cultivating outstanding and morally responsible educators and professionals, as well as supporting their lifelong learning.

EdUHK has three SD programmes all situated within the Department of Early Childhood Education (ECED; the Department), under the Faculty of Education and Human Development (FEHD; the Faculty). As of February 2018, the University had a total of 755 students across the three programmes. There are 96 staff in ECED, 39 of whom are engaged in teaching and supporting the University's SD students.

1. GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1.1 EdUHK offers three SD programmes, all within ECED, the Sub-degree Providing Unit in FEHD. The SD provision comprises two UGC-funded Higher Diploma (HD) programmes at Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) Level 4: a two-year, full-time programme in Early Childhood Education (HD(ECE)) and a two-year, evening mixed mode programme in Kindergarten Education (HD(KG)); and a new, charity-funded, one-year full-time Diploma in Early Childhood Education (Supporting Learning and Teaching for Non-Chinese Speaking Children) (D(ECE)) at HKQF Level 3, which had its first entry in 2017/18.
- 1.2 ECED's Development Plan for its degree and SD programmes is aligned with the strategic priorities of the Faculty and the University, and with the University's vision, mission and core values. The SD programmes are firmly integrated within ECED, with clear pathways for SD students to progress to higher levels of study.
- 1.3 The Panel found from meetings with staff at University, Faculty and Department levels that there is a strong commitment to the SD provision, although, due to changes in demand, the University is proposing to phase out the part-time HD programme, HD(KG), from 2019/20.
- 1.4 The Panel reviewed the governance, management, planning and accountability of the University's SD provision as described in the IS and associated supplementary material, and in additional documentation requested. The Panel also held meetings with members of the University's senior executive, staff involved in the delivery and management of the SD programmes, an EE and an External Reviewer, and representatives of various groups of stakeholders.
- 1.5 The Panel found that the University has a sound approach to setting and maintaining academic standards, operating within clearly defined academic

governance structures. All courses, including SD programmes, operate under the same quality assurance (QA) framework. The Faculty and the Department are guided by EdUHK's policies, procedures and QA mechanisms, including the University's General Academic Regulations (GAR), QA and Learning and Teaching Handbooks and Department Handbooks.

- 1.6 The Academic Board (AB) is the University's chief academic forum and is accountable to EdUHK's Council, with delegated powers to oversee and regulate all academic matters. Sub-committees of AB include the Academic Planning and Development Committee (APDC) and the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee (LTQC); Faculty Boards (FB) also report to AB.
- 1.7 Initial programme planning proposals are submitted to FB and APDC. The Associate Dean (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) of FEHD oversees QA processes for the planning and development of new programmes and chairs Programme Committees, which monitor established programmes.
- 1.8 The University has multiple approaches to ensure standards and quality of its SD programmes, with formal mechanisms for external input by senior overseas academics embedded in the QA processes for programme approval (see Section 3), external examining and periodic reviews. Each programme has an EE, who is appointed for a maximum four-year period. They report annually on the standard and quality of each SD programme, and play an important role in benchmarking against comparable international programmes.
- 1.9 The University has an outcomes-based approach to learning and teaching and assessment. Programme Development Committees (PDCs) map Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) against HKQF Generic Level Descriptors to ensure they are the appropriate level. PDCs seek the views of external stakeholders during the planning stage and map the University's Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs), with PILOs and Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) prior to endorsement by FB (see Section 3).
- 1.10 From 2017/18, ECED's HD programmes have participated in the University's Programme Outcomes Assessment (POA) process, which systematically collects evidence of programme effectiveness and student performance relevant to the learning outcomes in POA reports, enabling programmes to make improvements to student achievement of learning outcomes.
- 1.11 HD programmes are monitored to ensure programme structure and curricula meet the Education Bureau (EDB)'s framework for HD programmes that lead to Qualified Kindergarten Teacher and/or Registered Child Care Worker status. An Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Teacher Education, which includes members of Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes, local

school leaders, EDB and Social Welfare Department officials, advises FEHD on the future development and planning of its programmes.

- 1.12 The University has a five-yearly programme review cycle, with an initial review normally in the academic year following the graduation of the first programme cohort. The University conducted a Unit and Programme Review of the SD (HD) provision in 2017, which concluded that well-structured systems were in place for monitoring the Department's performance and programme quality and commented on the high standards and effective practice of the HD programmes. The findings of the Panel are in agreement with this view. The Panel found that there was an effective and positive response by programme staff to feedback on HD programmes from EEs, External Reviewers and stakeholders.
- 1.13 The audit trail reviewed by the Panel showed a consistent application of the University's annual monitoring procedures for HD(ECE) and evidence of benchmarking of standards. SD Programme Co-ordinators produce an Annual Programme Report (APR) (see Section 2), which is cleared by the ECED Programme Leader for consideration by the Programme Committee, and then by the Associate Dean (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) and FB. Relevant data in APRs are also discussed at the Departmental and the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees (LTCs) (see Section 2). FB considers and approves APRs and reports on actions in their annual report to AB for comment. Programme Co-ordinators are responsible for monitoring follow-up actions and reporting progress to their Programme Committee.
- 1.14 The Panel found that the University has a systematic process for data collection and analysis, and the development, implementation and evaluation of action plans. The University's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Performance Indicators (PIs) for Learning and Teaching provide common reference points for the Department and the Faculty to review their performance and inform their plans (see Section 2).

2. APPROACH TO PROGRAMME QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 2.1 The University states the quality of its programmes is assured by the University's comprehensive and robust approach to QA, a view supported by QAC's Audit Report of EdUHK in the second audit cycle published in 2017, the scope of which covered programmes at first degree level and above and by the findings of the Panel during the current audit of SD operations.
- 2.2 The Panel reviewed the University's approach to QA of its SD provision through examination of documents provided in the IS and in additional documentation requested. The Panel also held meetings with members of the University's senior executive, staff involved in the delivery and management of the SD programmes, support services staff, current students and alumni.

- 2.3 All SD programmes at EdUHK follow the policies and procedures governing programme planning and development (see Section 3), annual monitoring and programme review (see Section 1). There is a clear account of QA and quality enhancement (QE) procedures in staff handbooks, which the Panel found were consistently applied.
- 2.4 AB assures the quality of the University's SD programmes through LTQC, FB, Faculty LTC (FLTC), Departmental LTC (DLTC) and SD Programme Committees. Programme Co-ordinators are responsible for the daily operation of SD programmes in line with University policies and procedures and for annual reporting on the programme (APR) (see Section 1). ECED's Programme Leader is responsible for standards, delivery, planning and review of ECED programmes, including SD programmes, and is a key link between Programme Co-ordinators, the Department and the Faculty.
- 2.5 The Head of ECED has overall responsibility for the quality of the Department's programmes, with the Associate Head (Learning and Teaching) and the Chair of DLTC having delegated responsibility for implementation of relevant policies. FLTC oversees the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in the Department.
- 2.6 The University's Academic Management Information System (AMIS) provides a central data store, enabling systematic analysis of information, including year on year trends, for evaluation and enhancement of programmes. The data stored include student admissions scores, graduate employment rates, yearly student progression, retention and attrition rates, student evaluation of teaching (SET) and student evaluation of field experience, employer evaluation of GILOs, and student participation in experiential learning activities.
- 2.7 The University surveys graduates and their employers annually in its Institutional Research on Graduates (IRG) survey. In the 2016 IRG survey, almost 97% of employer respondents in the kindergarten and nursery sector considered the University's graduate performance to be comparable to or better than that of graduates from other universities/institutions. Graduate Employment Survey data (2012-2016) showed that employment rates for HD(ECE) graduates are consistently high (more than 95%).
- 2.8 Programme Co-ordinators access programme data through AMIS for analysis and annual review in APR (see Section 1). Staff-Student Consultative Meetings (SSCMs) are organised by Programme Co-ordinators each semester to obtain students' views on their learning experience, student support and learning resources. Based on student surveys and course lecturer feedback on student performance, Programme Co-ordinators record issues of concern, identify good practice and draw up action plans. Student survey scores and feedback records for different courses are collated in APR for discussion at

DLTC. The mean SET scores for HD(ECE) and HD(KG) from 2012/13 to 2016/17 were good and comparable with the University mean.

- 2.9 Programme Co-ordinators collate student feedback data at the end of the academic year, including programme learning outcomes, learning resources, programme support, and student assessment, and convene meetings to discuss qualitative and quantitative data from programme evaluation and develop improvement plans.
- 2.10 In meetings with current HD and Diploma students and with alumni, the Panel received very positive comments about the quality of the SD programmes and the support available.
- 2.11 The Panel found that there was a systematic process for analysis of data, and for implementation and monitoring of plans to improve the quality of student learning opportunities. The audit trail for HD(ECE) illustrates a full round of annual programme monitoring, from the compilation of APR to the report to FB and subsequent feedback and show ECED has taken proactive steps to improve the HD(ECE) programme curriculum.

3. CURRICULUM DESIGN, PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESSES

- 3.1 The University decides which SD programmes to offer based on market and societal needs, internal strategic priorities and resource implications, as well as government policies. The programmes are designed to have a strong vocational bent, but also to enable further study.
- 3.2 New programmes must pass through two stages of approval, as stipulated in the Staff Handbook on Programme Quality Assurance. The Handbook outlines clear procedures and lines of responsibility, culminating in planning approval by APDC, and implementation approval by AB. The Associate Dean (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) advises and oversees the relevant QA processes.
- 3.3 Initial planning proposals are presented to APDC by the relevant FB. Following planning approval, a PDC with clear terms of reference and constitution is established. PDC is responsible for developing the preliminary curriculum framework and for preparing a proposal that summarises the new programme, including its PILOs and admission requirements, for approval by FB. Following approval, PDC develops a full proposal that sets out the details of the programme, and its alignment with the University's vision. The programme's structure and curriculum, a course list with detailed outlines, teaching and learning methods, assessment and graduation requirements, programme QA and QE aspects, and the staff and resources that will support the programme are described. Staff are assisted in the creation of CILOs by sound advice in the Staff Handbook on Programme Quality Assurance. This

approach contributes to the commendation in Section 5. In developing the full proposal, FB seeks the views of two External Reviewers, normally both from overseas, who consider the validity of the programme's academic aims and objectives, market demand, and whether its academic standard is comparable to those of similar programmes at peer universities. The externals' views are incorporated by PDC which submits a final proposal for endorsement by FB, prior to approval by AB.

- 3.4 In setting admission requirements, PDC makes reference to the University's General Entrance Requirements for Sub-degree Programmes, a document that specifically references each of the three SD programmes. Decisions on programme closure are made by AB on the advice of the relevant FB.
- 3.5 The Panel considered the extent to which the University is ensuring the quality of student learning in the planning phase by examining a range of pre-existing and bespoke documents. These include the Staff Handbook on Programme Quality Assurance, General Entrance Requirements for Sub-degree Programmes, Definitive Programme Documents, course outlines, market survey results, approval process documents for the D(ECE) programme, mapping documents of PILOs to GILOs and of CILOs to PILOs, POA portfolios, and programme publicity material. The Panel also studied committee minutes relevant to the SD provision including those at Faculty, Department and Programme levels. In meetings with senior University staff, academic managers, teaching staff and professional support staff, the Panel sought to confirm the University's view of its performance in the design, development and approval of its SD programmes. The Panel explored progression in learning, the role of external stakeholders, the relationship between learning outcomes at various levels and their relationship to assessment, admissions processes, and the preparation of recruitment materials. In meetings with students, the Panel investigated understandings of the nature of their programmes, their experience of admissions, and their views on recruitment materials.
- 3.6 Prior to development of the D(ECE) programme, the University conducted a market survey with potential participants and employers, proceeding on the basis of favourable responses. The D(ECE) programme currently has a small cohort and the University will consider future development of the programme if there is sufficient community need.
- 3.7 The University provided documents relating to the recent approval of the D(ECE) programme as exemplars of the approvals process. The material showed that the University's expectations were followed explicitly and that an extremely thorough appraisal by the External Reviewers had taken place. Each cohort of students has its own Definitive Programme Document, which serves as a ready and accurate reference to the nature of the programme and the regulations governing its operation.

- 3.8 The Panel heard that staff receive support to understand and implement the approvals process, through membership of the FLTC or DLTC. This approach does not encompass all staff engaged in the process, and learning is thus often undertaken by observing practice.
- 3.9 Learning outcomes are formulated at the level of the University (GILOs) and at programme and course levels (PILOs and CILOs). With the exception of the GILOs, which are essentially a list of skills, the Panel judged that learning outcomes at all levels used appropriate language and were well-formulated to drive the curriculum and student assessment. The University comprehensively maps PILOs to GILOs and CILOs to PILOs for all the SD programmes, showing in detail how the learning outcomes at these levels interrelate, and how learning outcomes ensure academic progression through the programmes. Course outlines demonstrate clear alignment between CILOs, learning activities and assessment tasks. The Panel was able to discern a complementary outcomes-based culture among University staff.
- 3.10 From 2017/18, the HD(ECE) and HD(KG) programmes participated in the POA scheme that tracks student learning progress, and ensures alignment with the CILOs, PILOs and GILOs. POAs essentially check the ongoing, detailed, constructive alignment of the learning outcomes with the curriculum and with assessment tools and practices. The approach will be rolled out across the University from 2018/19. POAs allow programmes to systematically collect data, demonstrate tangible results, and evidence on programme effectiveness and student performance relevant to the learning outcomes. They also enable programmes to make improvements by reviewing assessment data to enhance student achievement of learning outcomes. The Panel viewed the most recent POA portfolios for HD(ECE) and HD(KG) and confirmed the thoroughness of the approach. Staff met by the Panel recognised the value of POAs and expected the POA burden to become lighter as they become more familiar with the system.
- 3.11 The SD provision shows strong alignment with local regulatory requirements, including those of EDB. The University completed a detailed mapping of the alignment between the Generic Level Descriptors of HKQF, as well as the PILOs and course content of its SD provision as part of implementation approval. The Panel found that Programme Committees have clear oversight of alignment with qualification levels. Any changes to the external regulatory framework, for example the 2018 revisions to the HKQF Generic Level Descriptors, will be incorporated at annual programme review.
- 3.12 Applications for admission are received and screened by the Registry and are then passed to the programme team for a decision, typically following interview. Admissions policies are reviewed by LTQC and the continuing appropriateness of admissions criteria is monitored by the relevant Programme

Committee through consideration of achievement data. There is no Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to gain exemption from any part of the programmes because ECE teacher training is not recognised under the RPL mechanism. Where students have been admitted on the basis of special educational needs there is a robust framework to guide process and procedure. Counsellors of the Student Affairs Office (SAO) work with Programme Co-ordinators to assess students' needs and capabilities, and draw up supportive measures for teaching and learning. By way of an example, the Panel was provided with details of the adjustments made to accommodate a visually impaired student and viewed them as appropriate. The Programme Co-ordinators monitor the learning progress and the supportive measures in collaboration with SAO.

- 3.13 There are no formal student exchanges as part of the SD programmes, in part because the programmes are relatively short and one is part-time. Nonetheless, there is a rich and varied co-curricular programme of short-term study programmes and orientation-style visits to overseas locations. From 2018/19 the University will provide financial assistance for these visits to all full-time HD students.
- 3.14 Students and alumni met by the Panel were satisfied that the programmes provide adequate preparation for employment and further study. Students who complete D(ECE) may progress to HD(ECE). Students who complete either HD programme may articulate, and a good number have done so, to a small range of part-time top-up degrees. The degree programmes are in part designed for graduates of the HD programmes, allowing them to study while in employment, and there is good progression in content and learning outcomes from the HD programmes. This is driven by programme design and facilitated by staff overlap. The Panel considered that these top-up programmes offer good opportunities for SD students to continue their studies to degree level in an important range of specialisms.
- 3.15 The Panel initially heard that programme publicity information for prospective students is extracted from Definitive Programme Documents and approval documentation to ensure accuracy. However, an examination of the publicity material showed that some wording could not have originated in the University's formal documents. The Panel later established that publicity material is provided by the programme team and checked by the Associate Dean (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) of the Faculty. Web-based material is approved by the Registry. Students met by the Panel confirmed the accuracy and completeness of publicity material.
- 3.16 In summary, the framework that the University has developed for the design of its SD programmes is strong and deployed effectively to allow students to reach and demonstrate appropriate academic standards through varied learning opportunities. The pursuit of an outcomes-based approach is central.

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

- 4.1 The Department systematically implements the University's approach in its monitoring of the quality of SD programme delivery. Programme Coordinators and the Programme Leader play key leadership roles including at Programme Committees. Both the Department Handbook and the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Handbook provide staff with clear guidance on the outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning as it applies to SD provision. The Programme Leader is the link between Programme and the Department and ensures overall QA of the SD Programmes.
- 4.2 The Panel reviewed the University's approach to SD programme delivery, including pedagogical approaches, learning environments and resources, and scheduling through examination of the IS, supplementary materials provided and additional documentation requested. The Panel also held meetings with members of the University's senior team, staff involved in the delivery and management of SD programmes, support services staff, current students and alumni.
- 4.3 The Panel established that the University uses multiple channels to gauge feedback from stakeholders, both internal and external. Teaching staff seen by the Panel confirmed that the Centre for Learning, Teaching and Technology (LTTC) and the Department play an important role in providing adequate support on Outcomes-Based Assessment, professional skills and pedagogical development, use of Moodle and new e-learning initiatives. The University has utilised external input to design, monitor and benchmark approaches to both learning and academic standards. Teaching staff value support from the Teaching Development Grants which are useful in enabling integration of e-learning into learning and teaching of ECED's SD programmes.
- 4.4 The Panel visited the Early Childhood Learning Centre (ECLC) which is a programme-specific learning resource and training facility to support all ECE students including those on SD programmes. SD students highly value the opportunities for observation and hands-on experience in the ECLC at an early stage of their programmes. ECLC provides attachment opportunities for new teachers who have no local ECE experience.
- 4.5 SD students enjoy the same library privileges as undergraduate students. The annually conducted Library User Survey includes feedback data specifically from SD students. The summary ratings evidenced that SD students are generally satisfied with the library services provided. The Panel heard that students could have library books sent to their respective Study Centres and that the Library communicates well with these students.

- 4.6 Students appreciate the easily accessible physical and e-learning environments that support their learning. The Panel noted that although there was no specific survey and evaluation done for SD students, the Estates Office conducts an Annual User Survey from all students of the University. Further, SD students can articulate any specific concerns at SSCMs.
- 4.7 HD(KG) students indicated to the Panel that their location at Kowloon Tong Satellite Study Centre (KTSSC) was convenient, but shared specific concerns about the physical learning environments lacking some of the facilities available at the main campus. The students had also raised concerns about scheduling of some extra-curricular activities which made it harder for them to attend. The University is considering ways to better accommodate SD students' academic needs and their participation in co-curricular activities.
- 4.8 The Panel was able to confirm that ECED has capitalised on the University's e-Learning Initiatives to enrich the e-learning environment for SD students. Teachers pointed to useful training in e-learning, citing the use of Moodle, instruction on *Turnitin* and help with video production, all of which have enhanced interactive teaching. The Blended Learning for University Enhancement initiative, launched to promote 'One Course One Online Lesson' among teaching staff, has been shared at Faculty, Department and Programme levels and has helped to develop quality online lessons using pedagogical features of the Moodle Learning Management System and other tools.
- 4.9 The Panel was able to conclude that ECED implements the University's approach in its monitoring of the quality of SD programme delivery. Handbooks provide staff with clear guidance on the outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning as it applies to SD provision. Accessible physical and e-learning environments are appreciated by students for their role in supporting learning, with the practical experience at the ECLC especially valued. The University is seeking to further accommodate SD students' academic needs and participation in co-curricular activities.

5. SUPPORT FOR TEACHING QUALITY, INCLUDING PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The University's human resources policies apply to all staff, including those ECED staff working on SD programmes. The teaching workload allocation is transparently set out in the Department Handbook.
- 5.2 The Panel tested the University's support for teaching quality by scrutinising relevant documentation provided by the University including the IS and supplementary materials covering professional and pedagogical development. The Panel also discussed support for professional development with University senior managers, Faculty managers, Programme Leader and Programme Co-

ordinators, staff teaching SD programmes and representatives of academic support services.

- 5.3 All new staff receive a comprehensive and helpful induction which covers learning and teaching, and assessment policy and procedures. In addition, mentors are assigned to new staff to provide advice and support on teaching and administrative matters. A certificated course, 'Introduction to Teaching in Higher Education' is compulsory for all new, full-time teaching staff. Current staff, both full- and part-time, are given mandatory induction training on Moodle and e-learning techniques, including *Turnitin*.
- 5.4 The LTTC offers various professional development activities to support teaching and learning at EdUHK. LTTC periodically collects feedback to assess needs across faculties, following which the Vice President works with Associate Deans to assess training requirements. ECED also undertakes a bi-annual survey to collect information about professional development needs. Results from the analysis have been used to provide tailored seminars and workshops oriented to specific professional requirements. The Panel found that staff are appreciative of the development opportunities provided.
- 5.5 A coherent University e-Learning Policy is in place with extra funding released for e-learning innovation projects. The Faculty also promotes e-learning, developing specific apps, while at Department level, ECED has three blended learning ambassadors to support e-learning. ECE colleagues attend University (including LTTC) and Faculty e-learning events, as well as engaging with projects.
- 5.6 The Panel therefore commends the comprehensive approach, evident at Department, Faculty and University levels, with the LTTC playing a focal role that leads to effective and tailored professional development of SD programmes teaching staff.
- 5.7 Teaching quality of full-time and part-time ECED staff is monitored through an evaluation mechanism. Formal appraisal, which normally takes place on a three-year cycle, works at two levels with a Departmental Review Committee (DRC) and a university review committee. DRC is chaired by the Head of the Department, and includes an elected ECED member and one from another department, plus two professors appointed respectively by the President and the Faculty Dean. The Committee addresses staff performance in teaching, research and services (including professional support to the community, regionally, and nationally). It includes review for a pay increment. The Head of the Department also meets all staff regularly on a less formal basis.
- 5.8 Good teaching is rewarded through various award and recognition schemes, such as the President's Awards for Outstanding Performance in Teaching, and Faculty-level teaching awards. Letters of appreciation are also used to

recognise good teaching, based on SET scores, at the Department level. The turnover of ECED academic staff is low.

- 5.9 The Panel concluded that ECED staff delivering SD programmes at EdUHK are well supported through induction, the mentoring system as well as the various professional development opportunities available in the Department, the Faculty and LTTC. Teaching quality is effectively monitored and rewarded.

6. STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 EdUHK has a comprehensive assessment policy that aims to fulfil multiple objectives including assessing student performance in a formative and summative manner; and accounting to the community on broader outcomes including language, information and communication technologies, generic skills and competencies. Principles and guidance are set out in the Policy on Student Assessment.
- 6.2 EdUHK asserts a commitment to an outcomes-based approach to student learning with POA a fundamental part of the assessment of student achievement. The University's Policy on Student Assessment requires all programmes, including SD programmes, to use a grading framework and assessment rubrics linked to CILOs to guide criterion-referenced assessment. As explained in Sections 2 and 3, CILOs are in turn linked to PILOs and to more generic GILOs.
- 6.3 EdUHK has developed specific policies that cover dimensions of assessment which can prove challenging in practice. These include Principles and Guidelines on Assessment of Group Work and Policies and Mechanisms for Assessing Student Field Experience. The University has an unambiguous policy relating to academic integrity which articulates a zero-tolerance approach to plagiarism. These policies apply universally including in relation to SD programmes.
- 6.4 Advice to students about assessment expectations and obligations is set out in GAR and in the Student Handbook. Advice tailored to the requirements of individual courses is provided in course information provided at the commencement of courses.
- 6.5 The Panel examined the effectiveness of the University's assessment practices in relation to SD programmes by examining documentation including the IS, additional information (including the audit trail of the annual monitoring of the HD(ECE)), the Student Handbook and GAR, advice provided to academic staff in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Handbook and the generic grade descriptors used in SD assessment and reports of External Reviewers and EEs for SD programmes. The Panel also met with senior University leaders and members responsible for SD programmes, including the Dean and Associate

Deans of FEHD, the Head of ECED, as well as Programme Co-ordinators and the Programme Leaders for SD programmes. The Panel held discussions with academic staff and administrative staff, students and alumni, and with an EE and an External Reviewer regarding implementation of aspects of assessment policy in relation to SD programmes.

- 6.6 The Panel found that within SD programmes there is a strong commitment to apply the principles of Outcomes-Based Learning (OBL) and the adoption of criterion referenced assessment evidenced through application of the University's Policy on Student Assessment. The Department Handbook and the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Handbook provide important guidance to academic staff on the use of assessment rubrics aligned to CILOs and the University's generic grading framework to achieve OBL assessment. Newly appointed staff are required to participate in an induction programme in which guidance is provided on use of the University's approach to OBL. Sample course outlines and the Unit and Programme Review show a strong focus on rubrics and the grading framework to develop appropriate forms of assessment, and on alignment of CILOs with PILOs and the more generic GILOs. Academic staff demonstrate a sound understanding of requirements. This endorses the University's approach to assessment and its application within SD programmes, in particular the manner in which course-level assessment and learning outcomes are to be tracked, and the need to link course content to assessment and CILOs. Staff reveal a clear awareness of the Department Handbook, the Policy on Student Assessment and the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Handbook and how to use available resources in framing and administering course assessment.
- 6.7 Students receive advice on assessment expectations and rights to appeal assessment or progression decisions through the Student Handbook and other material on the student website, through course outlines provided by academic staff at the commencement of a course, and via Moodle and supplementary information provided during the course. Students expressed satisfaction with the manner in which they are advised of assessment requirements, the forms of assessment for a particular course and the way in which assessment will be graded. They also indicated that they knew of their review rights in relation to assessment and how to formally appeal a grade where considered necessary. Students are regularly surveyed on perceptions of appropriateness of assessment as part of regular SET surveys and satisfaction scores are monitored. The relatively low number of appeals lodged against assessment decisions is seen by students as indicating the informal review process is working well. Students also advised that feedback on assessment was useful and provided in a timely manner.
- 6.8 Both academic staff and students advised that they found application of the University's policy on assessment of group work and policy on assessment of field experience placements worked fairly with the former actively

discouraging ‘free loading’ by individual students. Students demonstrated a good understanding of both policies and affirmed the proactive manner in which they perceived them to be put into practice.

- 6.9 EdUHK regularly receives feedback on assessment from students via SSCMs. Academic managers and staff were able to provide examples where student feedback in relation to assessment practices had resulted in changes in scheduling and other modifications to the manner in which assessment occurs.
- 6.10 The University applies a standard policy in relation to moderation and double marking of major items of assessment. Programme Co-ordinators and academic staff teaching SD programmes demonstrated a sound understanding of expectations in this area and the application of policy. EEs sample and comment on assignments after each semester and Course Co-ordinators are responsible for discussing comments with academic staff and providing written responses.
- 6.11 Departmental Assessment Panels oversee assessment at the Department level, with grading outcomes subsequently considered by Board of Examiners. The Panel was able to confirm that the University’s policy is appropriately adhered to in relation to assessment of SD programmes.
- 6.12 EdUHK applies a number of different approaches to monitoring the effectiveness and quality of its assessment framework. International benchmarking occurs through programme EEs, typically appointed for a maximum four years, reviewing a programme from an international standards perspective. Through the audit trail on the HD(ECE), the Unit and Programme Review Report and discussion with an External Reviewer, the Panel was able to confirm international benchmarking in SD programmes is undertaken, and the perceived value of the EE’s and External Reviewer’s role for Programme Co-ordinators and other academic managers. The Department’s Unit and Programme Reviews and the more recently introduced POAs also provide, as part of a broader whole of programme review, periodic evaluation at Faculty and University levels (via LTQC and AB) of the appropriateness of assessment on SD programmes and its links with CILOs and PILOs. Finally, through SET and consultation occurring within regular SSCMs, SD students are able to provide regular feedback on the appropriateness of assessment. The Panel found evidence of the University’s willingness to modify and improve assessment practices as a result of student feedback.
- 6.13 The Panel was able to test the efficacy of these monitoring processes and found substantial evidence of advice from EEs and External Reviewers and feedback from students being taken into account in refining modes and sequencing of particular components of assessment within SD programmes.

- 6.14 As indicated, there is a robust policy framework in place in relation to academic integrity and the avoidance of plagiarism. Information about this policy is communicated to staff via the Department Handbook, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Handbook and induction briefings for new academic and teaching staff. In turn, staff advise students via the course outlines, Moodle and in class discussion about expectations around academic integrity and plagiarism. Students are required to use *Turnitin* software as part of the submission process for substantial written assessment and are given training about its use. The University's zero-tolerance policy seems to have been effective in respect of SD programmes with no case of academic misconduct relating to plagiarism having occurred over the past four years.
- 6.15 The Panel received advice that the form of certification for SD programme awards is identical to that used by the University for other award programmes, that is, the standard EdUHK award parchment applies for all SD programmes.
- 6.16 In summary, the Panel was able to note that the University applies to its SD programmes a clear and comprehensive set of policies and processes framing all aspects of student learning assessment, engages with SD students to ensure they understand assessment expectations, conducts external reviews of assessment outcomes and evaluates its assessment policies and practices. The Panel accordingly commends the University's application and review of its comprehensive policy framework governing student learning assessment for SD programmes.

7. STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- 7.1 The University and ECED seek to provide SD students with a fit-for-purpose, rich and engaging learning environment by collecting feedback, supporting student well-being, academic and professional growth, broadening students' international exposure, and providing tailor-made language enhancement initiatives.
- 7.2 The Panel tested the effectiveness of EdUHK's approach to student participation and student support services by scrutinising relevant documentation provided by the University and ECED. This included the IS and a full range of supplementary materials. In addition, the Panel discussed student participation and student support with University senior managers, Faculty and Department managers, Programme Leader and Programme Co-ordinators, staff teaching SD programmes, representatives of academic support services, employers and alumni, and students from SD programmes.
- 7.3 EDUHK engages SD students in university governance on an equal footing with undergraduate and postgraduate students. SD students are actively encouraged to serve as committee members of FB, SSCMs, and the Early

Childhood Education Students' Association, either through class election, volunteering or nomination. Student representatives explained that training is provided by the FB Secretariat and described a fruitful experience. The comprehensive Student Handbook provides students with clear information on relevant policy and guidelines.

- 7.4 The University is effective in using data to promote student participation and feedback, and in informing student development, support and services. The Programme Committees and SAO work together to closely monitor student support needs. SAO provides SD students with the same services and student development activities as those enjoyed by undergraduate students. SD student feedback is systematically followed up to identify improvements, for example with respect to counselling services and SAO activities to support non-Chinese speaking students. The Panel encourages the University to consider collecting specific feedback data from HD(KG) and D(ECE) students as well as from those on the HD(ECE) programme.
- 7.5 The Academic Advising System is employed to assist students in drawing up study routes and working out life and career goals. Academic Advisors are encouraged to advise students on programme issues, scheduling and time management. Students appreciate meetings with Advisors who they feel are helpful, supportive and responsive.
- 7.6 The Panel was of the view that the learning experiences of SD students have been enriched by a wide range of non-formal learning activities and services provided by SAO. Further, the Global Affairs Office enables diversified experiential learning opportunities to promote the global exposure of SD students. Career preparation workshops and practicum experience organised by the HD(ECE) and D(ECE) programme teams give SD students valuable skills and preparation for employment.
- 7.7 The use of the Experiential Learning and Achievements Transcript (ELAT) is an effective incentive in encouraging SD students to participate in the areas of Citizenship and Civic Engagement, Careers and Professional Development, Global and Cultural Enrichment and Personal Effectiveness. The Faculty, the Department and the SD Programme Leader meet annually to share Whole Person Development Inventory and ELAT data with a view to planning for student development.
- 7.8 The University has responded to students' requests made at SSCMs for international perspectives and experience. The Non-local Study Tour Scheme, launched to meet the need for global exposure of SD students, has received favourable feedback with students appreciative of the benefits. The University is planning to extend the initiative beyond the original three-year pilot period.

- 7.9 The Centre for Language in Education (CLE) provides language support to all students of the University including SD students, with ECED working with CLE to design new English enhancement courses to meet SD students' specific needs. CLE has plans to provide online language support to students studying in the KTSSC and Tseung Kwan O Study Centre (TKOSC). The University's IRG also provides useful data to monitor the effectiveness of enhancement activities offered by CLE.
- 7.10 To meet student support needs of SD students at KTSSC and TKOSC, the University provides tailor-made workshops and support services. The Panel encourages the University in its efforts to provide more comprehensive support to connect SD students who are studying away from the main Tai Po campus by offering bespoke summer programmes and weekend co-curricular and extra-curricular activities at the campus as well as at KTSSC and TKOSC. Similarly, the Panel supports the aim of better integrating experiential activities, including co-and extra-curricular, with formal learning for SD students, especially those studying away from the main Tai Po campus.
- 7.11 The Panel was able to conclude that SD students are encouraged to engage in university governance through engagement in various meetings, and students find the opportunities fruitful and informative. SD students also value the Academic Advising System and language enhancement services, as well as workshops provided by SAO for ECED. Experiential activities and non-local study tours enrich their learning. The University is encouraged in its ambitions to provide more comprehensive support to those students studying away from the main Tai Po campus.

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

- 8.1 The University's approach to reflection and follow-through makes good use of a variety of data collected in the course of running its SD programmes, including admissions scores and feedback from students, graduates, staff, field experience providers and EEs. Programme data are analysed by Programme Committees, and course data by the Department.
- 8.2 The University recognises the complex relationship between QA, QE and quality improvement, and defines QE broadly to include strategic development of its portfolio of programmes.
- 8.3 The University has developed KPIs and PIs in six domains, one of which is 'learning and teaching' with three KPIs and eight PIs. Based on data in AMIS, Programme Committees via APRs assess programme implementation against relevant KPIs and PIs and formulate improvements as necessary.

- 8.4 The Panel tested the University's capacity for reflection and follow-through in meetings with senior staff, academic managers, academic and teaching staff, professional support staff, and students. The Panel focused on the University's strategic approach to improvement and enhancement and their operationalisation, including the collection and analysis of relevant data, and how these are used to enhance the student learning experience. The Panel scrutinised a range of relevant documentary evidence including the minutes of Programme Committees and Programme Co-ordination Meetings, APRs, the 2017 review of ECED, and examples provided by the University showing how it uses feedback from a range of stakeholders to prompt change in the student experience.
- 8.5 AMIS users interrogate the system to produce various reports that feed into programme management, such as annual programme reporting and the identification of at-risk programmes. Target and performance data against the University's KPIs and PIs are clearly discussed in APRs, and result in specific action planning to improve performance. APRs also contain student achievement data, considering final Grade Point Averages and admission scores.
- 8.6 Examples of responses include: providing more academic guidance, study skill training, and support to students to adapt to University life in response to the new students' survey; responding to students' evaluation of achievement of programme objectives by supplementing language provision; responding to attrition rate data by boosting induction arrangements, including time-management sessions, and welfare support mechanisms; and responding to a survey of employers by making changes to the curriculum and assessments. In addition, students met by the Panel were able to give abundant examples of where the University has made significant change as a result of their feedback.
- 8.7 Minutes of relevant Programme Committees confirm vigorous discussion of data, particularly those contained in APRs. The Panel also noted considerable discussion and action planning in relation to feedback from various sources, including EEs and the Advisory Committee, at Programme Co-ordination Meetings. Though these meetings are minuted, the previous minutes are not routinely presented as a formal opportunity to report on any follow-up actions that may be taken. The University might wish to consider this further.
- 8.8 Important though APRs are, the University additionally acts on other data where it can. For example, the 2017 report of the Unit and Programme Review for ECED made numerous comments for consideration that were each addressed systematically by the Department in an action plan. Graduate employment survey data, including temporal trends, are considered by the Student Affairs Committee that feeds back its analysis to ECED.

- 8.9 In terms of evaluating its systems for acting on QA data, the University periodically checks the ongoing suitability and currency of the data generated through AMIS, including both survey questions and those surveyed, via the AMIS Task Force. Nonetheless, while the University is clearly proactive in seeking the views of stakeholders and swiftly acting on them, it has yet to become fully proactive in setting its own, reflection-driven agenda for enhancement that delivers change from an organic origin.
- 8.10 In summary, the University provided plentiful and detailed evidence of its effective responsiveness to its internal and external environment. In general, the University makes good use of survey data and other data about its SD provision, including through analysis of temporal trends and comparisons with other elements of the University's provision in action planning. APRs demonstrate the capacity of the University to analyse data within the context of the Department's QA system, and make consequent improvements.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 EdUHK's three SD programmes, offered by ECED in FEHD, are effectively integrated with ECED's degree provision, with clear pathways for SD students to progress to higher levels of study. The SD provision is fully aligned with the strategic priorities of the Department, the Faculty and the University, and it reflects EdUHK's vision, mission and core values. There are effective governance structures and procedures for setting and maintaining academic standards. SD programmes are aligned with the Generic Level Descriptors of HKQF and benchmarked with internationally comparable provision and an outcomes-based approach to teaching and assessment.
- 9.2 There is a consistent and comprehensive approach to QA. SD programmes fully adhere to the University's clear QA policies and procedures. EdUHK systematically collects, reviews and uses student outcome data and other PIs to identify areas for improvement. There is effective implementation and evaluation of action plans and prompt responses to feedback from all stakeholders. Monitoring undertaken at SD Department and Programme levels enables reflection and effective response. The University uses survey data and other data to analyse temporal trends and make comparisons with other University provision, in its action planning.
- 9.3 ECED carefully follows University's requirements for the development and approval of new programmes, using PILOs to develop CILOs and assessments. Admission requirements are set with reference to the University's General Entrance Requirements for Sub-degree Programmes and monitored within ECED.
- 9.4 ECED systematically implements the University's approach in its monitoring of the quality of SD programme delivery. Readily accessible physical and e-

learning environments are appreciated by students for their role in supporting learning. The practical experience at the ECLC is especially valued. ECED staff delivering SD programmes benefit from mandatory training courses and an effective mentoring system. There is a comprehensive and tailored approach to the professional development of staff teaching SD programmes with LTTC playing a focal role. Teaching quality is rigorously monitored.

- 9.5 A comprehensive and robust student assessment policy framework is applied systematically to SD programmes. Staff effectively implement guidance on use of assessment rubrics and grading. Students are provided with clear information on assessment processes, specific requirements for assignments, and avenues available for review of academic decisions. Policies for internal moderation, the use of EEs, and ratification of grades are appropriately applied. External benchmarking of assessment is undertaken in reviews of SD programmes. Academic misconduct policies are effectively applied. Generally, there is systematic application and review of a comprehensive policy framework governing student learning assessment for SD programmes.
- 9.6 SD students are able to engage in university governance. They are ably supported by the Academic Advising System, language enhancement services, and workshops from SAO. Students are appreciative of experiential activities and non-local study tours which enrich their learning. The University is seeking to provide more comprehensive support to those students studying away from the main Tai Po campus.

APPENDIX A: THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG (EDUHK) *[Information provided by the University]*

History

The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) was established in 1994, building upon the foundation laid by 65 years of teacher training by the former Colleges of Education. In 2016, HKIEd was granted the university title as The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). EdUHK is the only UGC-funded university dedicated to teacher education and the professional development of teachers in Hong Kong.

The Department of Early Childhood Education (ECED) is the Sub-degree Providing Unit in EdUHK. ECED has continuously contributed to cutting-edge research and professional development in early childhood education (ECE). It is committed to preparing, nurturing and supporting early childhood teachers and principals throughout their professional journeys. ECED offers academic programmes ranging from SD to doctorate degrees, which makes it an indispensable provider of kindergarten teacher education in Hong Kong. For over two decades, ECED has been offering government-commissioned HD programmes in ECE.

Vision and Mission

EdUHK

Vision

We will further enhance our role as a leading university in the Asia Pacific region and beyond, with a focus on educational research, development and innovation. We will continue to raise our profile and impact locally, regionally and internationally through our high quality research and scholarship. We are committed to nurturing outstanding and caring educators and professionals who contribute constructively to sustainable social and economic development in Hong Kong and beyond.

Mission

Committed to the Education-plus approach, our primary mission is to lead educational innovation, and to promote and support the strategic development of teaching, teacher education and disciplines complementary to education by preparing outstanding and morally responsible educators and professionals while supporting their lifelong learning.

We will:

- provide a multidisciplinary learning and research environment beyond education that is conducive to intellectual pursuits, free thinking and speech, advocacy of policy and practice, and the promotion of collaboration and diversity;

- enhance professional teacher and teaching education programmes and programmes in disciplines complementary to education with innovative curricula which will enrich students' experiences and enable them to realise their personal potential as well as their educational and career goals;
- prepare our students to become educators and professionals who can integrate theory and practice, and who are creative, innovative, intellectually active, entrepreneurial, socially caring and globally aware;
- foster a vibrant research culture and environment which contributes to the advancement of knowledge, scholarship and innovation, with a sustainable impact on social progress and human betterment; and
- engage in knowledge transfer activities which contribute to the development of the University and the wider community while serving the needs of educational and social development locally, regionally and internationally.

ECED

Vision

Through teaching, research, and knowledge exchanges, we aim to inspire the next generation of educators, researchers, and policymakers in the field of early childhood education within the Asia-Pacific region. Our ultimate goal is to lead the field of early childhood education and family studies toward excellence by promoting research-informed pedagogy and practices, and helping our graduates become lifelong learners who are able to educate and nurture young children.

Mission

- Conduct high quality research that informs teaching and policy making;
- Create a creative and dynamic environment that allows for interactive teaching and effective learning;
- Nurture early childhood professionals who are informed of the best practices, responsive to the needs of learners, and aware of local and international trends in early childhood education;
- Equip our students with moral values, leadership skills, and global perspectives;
- Foster a collegial culture within our department;
- Connect families, schools, agencies, and communities; and
- Expand our partnerships with local and international communities.

Role Statement

EdUHK:

- (a) offers a range of programmes leading to the award of certificates, first degrees and postgraduate diplomas, which provide suitable preparation for a career in education and teaching in the pre-school, school and vocational training sectors;

- (b) also offers a series of programmes which provide professional education and development for serving teachers in these sectors;
- (c) nurtures through all its programmes knowledgeable, caring and responsible teachers who will serve the needs of Hong Kong schools;
- (d) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (e) delivers degree programmes relating to secondary education whenever possible through strategic collaborations with other local tertiary institutions;
- (f) provides a source of professional advice and development, and of research in education, as appropriate, to support the pre-school, school and vocational training sectors in Hong Kong;
- (g) maintains strong links with the community, and in particular the schools and the teaching profession;
- (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; and
- (i) 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 Unit

As of 2018, ECED offers a total of 22 academic programmes, ranging from SD to postgraduate levels, to meet the learning needs of students and society's diverse expectations. At the SD level, ECED offers the following three programmes:

- Diploma in Early Childhood Education (Supporting Learning and Teaching for Non-Chinese Speaking Children)
- Higher Diploma in Early Childhood Education
- Higher Diploma in Kindergarten Education

ECED offers four undergraduate programmes, 10 postgraduate programmes including the Postgraduate Diploma in Education and both Masters and Doctorates, as well as five Certificate in Professional Development programmes. These programmes focus on ECE and extend to cover areas such as leadership, special needs, non-Chinese speaking children, child and family education, etc. A variety of articulation pathways for students from differing educational or professional backgrounds is provided.

Staff and Enrolment Numbers of Sub-degree Programmes

A breakdown of staff and programme enrolments in 2017/18 is as follows –

Sub-degree Providing Unit	Academic and Academic Supporting Staff Numbers*		Programme Enrolment Numbers	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
ECED	38	34	738	34

*Includes only staff involved in teaching SD programmes in the Department.

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT FINDINGS

The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) and the Audit Panel for conducting the sub-degree quality audit, and welcomes the audit findings presented in the comprehensive Audit Report for the University. The positive audit findings confirm the University's achievement of the two goals it set for this audit exercise: assuring quality student learning experiences and ensuring 'fit for purpose' quality enhancement practices.

The Report confirmed that the University's sub-degree provision aligns with the strategic priorities of the Department of Early Childhood Education (the Sub-degree Providing Unit (SDPU)), the Faculty and the University, and reflects EdUHK's vision, mission and core values in education (para. 1). The University is pleased to learn that the Panel has made commendable remarks and offered constructive comments in the eight audit dimensions under examination. In particular, the University thanks the Panel for its commendations of the University's comprehensive approach, evident at the Department, Faculty and University levels, which has led to the effective and tailored professional development of teaching staff (para. 5.6), as well as the University's application and review of its comprehensive policy framework governing student learning assessment for sub-degree programmes (para. 6.16).

The Panel has identified 'plentiful and detailed evidence of its (University) effective responsiveness to its internal and external environment' (para. 8.10). This evidence includes, but is not limited to, a consistent and comprehensive approach to quality assurance that enables the University to meet international standards and professional requirements (para. 2); proactive steps to improve programme curriculum (para. 2.11); a robust framework for the development and approval of new programmes (para. 3); effective and positive response to feedback from external reviewers and stakeholders (para. 1.12); a complementary outcome-based culture with clear alignment among learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment tasks (para. 3.9); and a strong commitment to Outcomes-Based Learning and the adoption of criterion referenced assessment (para. 6.6). The University concurs with the Panel's statement that the Higher Diploma and Diploma programmes are effectively integrated with the Department's degree provision with clear pathways for sub-degree students (para. 9.1).

The University appreciates the Panel's acknowledgement of the strong commitment of staff at the University, Faculty and Department levels to the sub-degree provision (para. 1.3). This commitment is reflected in the systematic implementation of the University's approach to monitoring the quality of its sub-degree programme delivery (para. 4) and in the comprehensive approach to the effective professional development of teaching staff (para. 5.6). The University is also delighted to hear the Panel's remark that 'teaching quality is effectively monitored and rewarded' (para. 5.9).

With regard to student participation and student support services, the Panel found that the University effectively uses data to promote student participation and feedback, and to inform student development, support and services (para. 7.4). The University will duly consider the Panel's comment about collecting specific feedback data from students of the Higher Diploma and Diploma programmes.

The Panel acknowledged the enriched learning experiences provided to sub-degree students, namely, the wide range of non-formal learning activities and services offered by the Student Affairs Office, the diversified experiential learning opportunities to promote global exposure offered by the Global Affairs Office (para. 7.6), accessible physical and e-learning environments to support learning, and the valued practical experiences furnished by the Early Childhood Learning Centre (para. 4.9). The University is mindful of the Panel's observation of students' concern over scheduling of some extra-curricular activities to facilitate student attendance, and welcomes the Panel's remark encouraging the University to consider ways to better accommodate students' academic needs and their participation in co-curricular activities (paras. 4.7, 7.10). The University will take proactive steps to explore the feasibility of providing more comprehensive support to connect sub-degree students who are studying away from the Tai Po main campus.

The University is grateful to the QAC and the Audit Panel for this audit exercise, which provides an invaluable opportunity for the University and its SDPU to reflect upon their uniqueness and strengths, and consider areas for further enhancement. Following the lead of the University, the SDPU will follow up on the Panel's comments in the areas identified in the Audit Report and take heed of the audit findings to strive for continuous enrichment of learning and teaching experiences for the benefit of its sub-degree students.

APPENDIX C: ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AB	Academic Board
AMIS	Academic Management Information System
APDC	Academic Planning and Development Committee
APR	Annual Programme Report
CILOs	Course Intended Learning Outcomes
CLE	Centre for Language in Education
D(ECE)	Diploma in Early Childhood Education (Supporting Learning and Teaching for Non-Chinese Speaking Children)
DLTC	Departmental Learning and Teaching Committee
DRC	Departmental Review Committee
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECED	Department of Early Childhood Education
ECLC	Early Childhood Learning Centre
EDB	Education Bureau
EdUHK	The Education University of Hong Kong
EE	External Examiner
ELAT	Experiential Learning and Achievements Transcript
FB	Faculty Board
FEHD	Faculty of Education and Human Development
FLTC	Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee
GAR	General Academic Regulations
GILOs	Generic Intended Learning Outcomes
HD	Higher Diploma
HD(ECE)	Higher Diploma in Early Childhood Education
HD(KG)	Higher Diploma in Kindergarten Education
HKIEd	The Hong Kong Institute of Education
HKQF	Hong Kong Qualifications Framework
IRG	Institutional Research on Graduates
IS	Institutional Submission
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
KTSSC	Kowloon Tong Satellite Study Centre
LTC	Learning and Teaching Committee
LTQC	Learning and Teaching Quality Committee
LTTC	Centre for Learning, Teaching and Technology
OBL	Outcomes-Based Learning
PDC	Programme Development Committee
PIs	Performance Indicators

PILOs	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
POA	Programme Outcomes Assessment
QA	Quality assurance
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
QE	Quality enhancement
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAO	Student Affairs Office
SD	Sub-degree
SDPU	Sub-degree Providing Unit
SET	Student Evaluation of Teaching
SSCMs	Staff-Student Consultative Meetings
TKOSC	Tseung Kwan O Study Centre
UGC	University Grants Committee

APPENDIX D: EDUHK AUDIT PANEL

The Audit Panel comprised the following:

Professor Denis Wright (Panel Chair)
Emeritus Professor, Imperial College London

Dr Ella Chan
Director of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Professor Mark Davies
Professor of Bioscience, University of Sunderland

Mr Ian Marshman
Associate Professor/Honorary Principal Fellow, Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education

Professor Ricky Wong
Associate Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) cum Academic Registrar, Hong Kong Baptist University

Audit Co-ordinator

Dr Neil Casey
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 May 2019)

Mr Lincoln LEONG Kwok-kuen, JP (Chairman)	Former 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
Dr Carrie WILLIS, SBS, JP	Chairperson, Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals

Ex-officio Member

Professor James TANG Tuck-hong Secretary-General, UGC

Secretary

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