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

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October 2018

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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 Hong Kong Baptist University (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

SD operations are aligned with the strategic priorities of the University. There is effective management of quality and standards within Sub-degree Providing Units (SDPUs), and the University's Quality Assurance Sub-Committee on Sub-degree Programmes (QASC) oversees their annual reports, produced on an improved template. However, the University's Quality Assurance Committee could exercise more consistent oversight of SD matters. The University, as a result of its preparation of the Institutional Submission, has commenced strengthening its arrangements by setting up a Sub-Degree Programmes Steering Committee reporting to Senate, and a second QASC to consider provision at Levels 1-3 of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF). Given some lack of clarity as to roles and responsibilities, relationships and reporting lines, these developments would be further reinforced by reviewing academic governance, to ensure that committee terms of reference and responsibilities are distinctive and fit for purpose. SDPUs produce annual action plans but the approach to improvement would be enhanced by more systematic collection and analysis of relevant data.

2. *Approach to programme quality assurance*

There is a culture of quality in the SDPUs which undertake programme development, monitoring and review in accordance with expected processes. The new template for annual reporting has promoted a more consistent approach although there is some scope for the University to further strengthen annual monitoring across the SDPUs. While QASC undertakes its role effectively, oversight from senior committees could be stronger. Use is made of Departmental Academic Advisors and other external advisors to enable international benchmarking.

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

The University's arrangements for the development and approval of SD programmes, student admission criteria and practices and for the promotion of SD programmes are fit for purpose and are enhanced through the revised annual reporting requirements. However, SDPUs would benefit from a greater consistency of the application of these arrangements across the Units. Further, Senate should have the opportunity of an early awareness of the possible development of SD programmes at QF Levels 1-3, and that the University as a whole would benefit from a clear programme development policy into which the detailed procedural guidance notes might fit.

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

The SDPUs are effective in monitoring major aspects of programme delivery, and there is clear evidence of resulting improvements. The Audit Panel (the Panel) noted the caring attitude of staff towards students, the student-centred culture of the SDPUs, and the high standard of teaching and learning support facilities. A more systematic survey of different aspects of students' experience and a definitive plan to encourage the wider adoption of innovative pedagogies would be beneficial.

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

The Panel concludes that there is evidence of alignment between University and SDPU policies and practices in relation to recruitment, induction, evaluation and professional development of staff, irrespective of whether they are administered centrally or locally. Recruitment follows a standardised process that is adhered to across SDPUs and induction is a requirement for all new staff appointed to SDPUs. Student evaluation of their learning experience and the quality of their teaching is administered centrally across SDPUs and is followed up consistently. While some initiatives are developing more gradually, professional development for SDPU staff is well supported.

6. *Student learning assessment*

The University's comprehensive policy for the assessment of student learning, along with its strategy to adopt Outcomes-based Teaching and Learning (OBTL) with the use of criterion referenced assessment (CRA), have been important initiatives to support a common approach to assessment across the SDPUs. Individual SDPUs are committed to enhancing the effectiveness of assessment practices, albeit differently. As a result of developing the Institutional Submission, the University has developed an improvement plan to ensure that adoption of OBTL and use of CRA occurs across all SDPUs. Improvements are required in operational guidance provided to external advisors, and the consistent and effective implementation and reporting of aspects of the Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning, specifically appeal of grades and academic honesty.

7. *Student participation and student support services*

There is student representation across SDPU committees and input from students has led to substantive improvements. However, the practice is not entirely uniform across SDPUs. Full-time SD students are provided with learning support and whole person development services comparable to those students of the UGC-funded undergraduate programmes. However, part-time students' lack of access to some facilities including remote library access and the e-Learning platform should be addressed. Many valuable co-curricular activities are offered to SD students who have reported a positive experience of these opportunities. The impact of these activities could be further enhanced with a more formal approach to guide delivery as well as a systematic evaluation of their effectiveness in terms of their contributing to the University's Intended Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes.

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

SDPUs access a range of data to contribute to the review and enhancement of programmes. The University's attention to data derived from graduate exit and destination surveys is more limited as their adoption, the survey instruments, methodology and reporting vary among the SDPUs. The revised annual report template provides a basis for the provision of consistent student satisfaction data, including graduate surveys. SDPUs collect meaningful information on the changing programme needs of the communities served by the University, though this is not reported in standardised form. The University's Strategic Plan, *Vision 2020,* lists a wide range of performance indicators, of which graduate employment surveys are one, but decisions on the scope and scale of graduate surveys and the responsibility for analysing and presenting resulting data currently reside within individual SDPUs.

INTRODUCTION

Explanation of the audit methodology

This is the report of a quality audit of the sub-degree (SD) operations of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU; 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 11 September 2017. A Mutual Briefing was held on 16-17 November 2017 which provided an opportunity for HKBU to brief Members of the Audit Panel (the Panel) on the context of the University's SD operations.

The Panel visited HKBU from 16 to 18 January 2018. They met the President and Vice-Chancellor and the senior team; heads of the Sub-degree Providing Units (SDPUs), the deans, heads of departments, SD programme leaders, full-time and part-time teaching staff, academic support services staff, full-time and part-time students, external stakeholders, and members of governance committees.

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

HKBU was founded as a post-secondary college in 1956 and acquired University status in 1994. A brief history of the University is provided at Appendix A.

The University's mission states that HKBU is committed to academic excellence in teaching, research and service, and to the development of the whole person in all these endeavours built upon the heritage of Christian higher education. HKBU aspires to be a leading liberal arts university in Asia for the world delivering academic excellence in a caring, creative and global culture.

In 2016-17, the University had 6 966 SD students on 135 SD programmes ranging across Levels 1-4 of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF). HKBU has four SDPUs. The School of Continuing Education (SCE), a continuing education arm of HKBU, offers SD programmes to meet the education and learning needs of school graduates and working adults. The College of International Education (CIE) delivers Associate Degree (AD) programmes comparable to the first two years of a four-year undergraduate (Ug) degree programme, to provide school leavers with career opportunities or an articulation path to Ug studies. The Division of Continuing and Professional Education (DCPE) in the School of Chinese Medicine (SCM) offers part-time and full-time programmes designed to train professionals and technical personnel in the field of Chinese medicine. The Academy of Film (AF) delivers a Higher Diploma (HD) in Creative Film Production which emphasises para-professional training in film and television production.

1. GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1.1 The University aims to align its SD operations with institutional strategic priorities and each of the SDPUs states how it meets University objectives. SD programmes are subject to University policies and practices for quality assurance and programme development. There is a two-tier approach to the monitoring of SD provision, first at the School level and then the University level. The SDPUs have processes in place for reporting via the School Board. Centrally, there is a well-established Quality Assurance Committee delegating responsibility for SD programmes to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee on Sub-degree Programmes (QASC). The University intends that direct reporting to the Quality Assurance Committee enables close scrutiny of SDPU operations. The Senate has ultimate oversight of all academic programmes including those at SD level. However, while Senate retains direct oversight of all SD programmes at QF Level 4, it has delegated authority for the monitoring of SD provision at QF Level 3 or below to the SDPUs. Each SDPU has its own governance and administrative structure. However, all of the SDPUs are required to provide an annual report to QASC and this provides the primary method for monitoring SDs.

1.2 As an outcome of its development of the Institutional Submission, the University had identified areas for improvement in its oversight of SDPUs, introducing several initiatives including a standardised template for SDPU annual reports, a Sub-Degree Programmes Steering Committee (SDPSC) of Senate and a second QASC to consider provision at QF Levels 1-3.

1.3 The Panel considered the effectiveness of the University's governance, management, planning and accountability of its SD operations, by scrutinising relevant documentation including the University's Institutional Submission, the SDPU self-evaluation documents (SEDs) and appendices, and relevant HKBU

quality assurance webpages. The University also provided two audit trails illustrating how SD programmes are developed and approved. Relevant committee minutes and annual reports from School Boards further assisted the Panel in its deliberations. In addition, the Panel met with University senior managers, members of Senate, Quality Assurance Committee and QASC, and academic leaders of SDPUs to further explore aspects of governance and management.

1.4   Within SDPUs, Programme Directors are the frontline staff identifying and resolving issues. Programme Committees, and/or Management Committees, and then School Boards all play a role in ensuring that issues are addressed within the annual reports. The University describes this approach, whereby the relevant officer produces a written response which can be scrutinised by a manager in the next level of the hierarchy, as "One Level Up".

1.5   The SDPUs' annual reports to QASC provide the University with a valuable means of overseeing SD provision. The Panel noted that QASC exercises its responsibility diligently and produces a comprehensive summary report for the Quality Assurance Committee, taking account of the work of SDPU committees on annual programme monitoring and programme approvals of QF Level 4 provision. The Quality Assurance Committee is then responsible for reporting to Senate on issues relating to SD provision.

1.6   From the analysis of the minutes of the Quality Assurance Committee and Senate, the Panel observed that matters relating to oversight of SD provision are often approved with minimal discussion or debate. However, the terms of reference for the Quality Assurance Committee and Senate clearly state that their responsibilities include SD provision. The Panel also noted that University senior management has not always been fully aware of significant developments, such as the CIE strategic plan, knowledge of which was gained in the course of an Academic Consultation Panel (ACP) review of the SDPU. It was noted that the Undergraduate Regulations Committee (URC) has a formal responsibility to ensure that regulations and policies apply to SDPUs and to make recommendations for student awards. However, the Panel was told that there is minimal discussion of SD provision at URC. Given these findings, the Panel reached the view that current governance arrangements should be reviewed to ensure that the University has effective oversight of SD programmes.

1.7   The University had already recognised that governance of SD provision needed to be strengthened, and, as noted, had established the SDPSC of Senate and a second QASC to specifically consider provision at QF Levels 1-3. However, scrutiny of the terms of reference for the new SDPSC and the additional QASC suggested an overall lack of clarity as to roles and responsibilities, relationships and reporting lines with respect to Senate, Quality Assurance Committee, and Senior Executive Committee. For example, under the proposed arrangements,

both SDPSC, reporting to Senate, and the two QASCs, reporting to Quality Assurance Committee, appear to have responsibilities for quality assurance of SD provision. Further, Quality Assurance Committee will be required to make reports to SDPSC as necessary. While the Panel recognises that these initiatives are developing, it nevertheless recommends that the University review its academic governance on its SD provision, to ensure that committee terms of reference and responsibilities are distinctive and fit for purpose, and there are clear lines of reporting for the quality assurance and the academic oversight of SD provision.

1.8 To assist in planning, each SDPU collects and reports on a range of data, using its own methods (for example, the appendices in the 2016/17 annual reports contain different information reported in various formats). The Panel found that there is no central, systematic collection nor trend analysis of such data. It also noted that only some of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the University's Strategic Plan, *Vision 2020*, are reported on in the SDPUs' new annual reports. The University explained that, in association with the setting up of SDPSC, it is establishing an Administrative Support Unit for SD provision, to be located in SCE. A new senior member of staff is to be appointed to centrally oversee and manage the sourcing and harvesting of information and to establish a data dashboard using a new, recently implemented information management system. It is intended that these developments will enable more consistent collection and analysis of data. The Panel would strongly encourage the University in strengthening its data collection and analysis, including with respect to KPIs (see Section 8), to enable more systematic management and planning of SDPU activities.

1.9 A commitment to improvement at SDPUs is embodied in an action plan appended to the annual report to QASC, which effectively monitors progress of responses. The Panel agreed with the view expressed in the Institutional Submission that annual reporting could be strengthened and noted improvements to the relevant proforma, designed to enable more effective monitoring by QASC and its parent committees. This is discussed further in Section 2.

1.10 The Panel concluded that SD operations are aligned with the strategic priorities of the University. There is effective management of quality and standards within SDPUs, and QASC oversees their annual reports produced on an improved template. However, the Quality Assurance Committee could exercise more consistent oversight of SD matters. The University, as a result of its preparation of the Institutional Submission, has commenced strengthening its arrangements for the governance, management, planning and accountability of SD provision by setting up SDPSC reporting to Senate, and a second QASC to consider provision at QF Levels 1-3. Given some lack of clarity as to roles and responsibilities, relationships and reporting lines, these developments would be further reinforced by reviewing academic governance, to ensure that

committee terms of reference and responsibilities are distinctive and fit for purpose. SDPUs produce annual action plans but the approach to improvement would be enhanced by more systematic collection and analysis of relevant data.

2. APPROACH TO PROGRAMME QUALITY ASSURANCE

2.1 The University describes a quality culture in which SDPUs, programmes and individual teachers take ownership for self-improvement. Evidence-based quality assurance processes incorporate feedback from students and other stakeholders, including via international benchmarking, and these result in a continuous quality cycle which provides for critical evaluation. The University lists major monitoring and review activities, and data collection initiatives that are designed to ensure rigorous quality assurance of SD programmes.

2.2 As noted at Section 1, Senate has formal oversight of all academic programmes. However, QASC has specific responsibilities for the quality assurance of SD provision. This includes reviewing proposals for new SD programmes and major revisions to existing programmes, as well as reviewing annual reports from SDPUs. Outcomes are reported to Senate via the Quality Assurance Committee in the form of a summary report. The University explains that this ensures that SD operations are fully considered at its senior committee. The SDPUs describe how they rigorously follow the University's academic policies, regulations and procedures, including with respect to annual reporting.

2.3 To evaluate the University's approach to programme quality assurance at SDPUs, the Panel scrutinised relevant documentation including the Institutional Submission, the SDPU SEDs and appendices, and relevant HKBU quality assurance webpages. Audit trails, including committee minutes and annual reports, illustrating how SD programmes are developed and approved, and then subsequently monitored and reviewed, assisted the Panel in testing the University's arrangements. In addition, the Panel met with senior University staff, SDPU managers and programme leaders, and external stakeholders.

2.4 There is a flowchart to guide programme development for SD programmes at QF Level 4, and another for provision at Levels 1-3. The Panel found that the SDPUs adhere closely to University requirements, but noted that while the University states that the Senate has oversight of all academic programmes including those at SD level, approval for SD programmes at QF Levels 1-3 is delegated to the relevant SDPU Board and therefore only becomes evident to QASC, Quality Assurance Committee and Senate in the SDPUs' annual reports. This is discussed further in Section 3.

2.5 The University's process for programme review details steps to be taken to gain approval for changes to a programme. For revision of QF Level 4 programmes, there are various protocols and approvals dependent on the extent of amendment; for example, major changes require Senate approval while less

significant changes can be approved by the Quality Assurance Committee or at School Boards. For provision at QF Levels 1-3, approval is delegated to the SDPU and each SDPU employs a number of mechanisms which help monitor programme quality and are addressed in annual reports. SDPUs collect students' feedback on their learning experience via Course Feedback Questionnaires (CFQs), formal and informal meetings with students, and exit surveys of graduating students. In addition, the new reporting template requires SDPUs to report on enrolment, admissions and graduation rates, including trend data. Students' progress across the duration of their programme is also tracked in terms of achievement of Course Intended Learning Outcomes and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes. The template now requires SDPUs to identify progress on issues arising in the previous year and to ensure that targets are measurable and time bound. In this context, the Panel affirms the introduction of the standard template for annual reporting as a means of developing a more consistent approach to the quality assurance of SD programmes.

2.6   However, the Panel also identified some areas where there is scope to enhance annual reporting and more specifically, the template. For example, it was noted that some useful indicators of programme quality, such as academic dishonesty and grade appeals (see Section 6), are not considered in the annual report. Further, there is an inconsistent approach to the collection and analysis of data with SDPUs employing different means of gathering management information. One consequence is that the types of appendices and survey outcomes are represented in quite different formats in the annual reports. The Panel would therefore encourage the University to consider further revising its annual report template for SD programmes to ensure more consistent and robust reporting to QASC and the committees to which it reports.

2.7   From its consideration of the cycle of annual monitoring, the Panel was able to confirm that SDPUs undertake quality assurance of programmes diligently. However, as stated in Section 1, while QASC is conscientious in monitoring reports from SDPUs, minutes of Quality Assurance Committee reveal limited discussion on quality assurance of SD programmes. The Panel's conclusion that oversight from senior committees could be stronger and acknowledged by the University in their plans for SDPSC contributes to the recommendation made in paragraph 1.7.

2.8   In addition to annual reporting, there is a Departmental Academic Advisor (DAA) scheme, which takes place every three years and involves a holistic evaluation of each department to identify targets for improvement and help the department benchmark its programmes against international standards. ACP visits occur every six years and have replaced re-accreditation of programmes, the objective being to make an integrated assessment of the academic, research and management work of the SDPUs. The Panel was able to confirm that the documented processes are followed and that the SDPUs respond to

recommendations for improvement arising in ACP and DAA reports as well as other forms of external review. However, as mentioned in paragraph 6.8, there is scope to improve the guidance to DAAs.

2.9   The University also employs various benchmarking activities to assist programmes and departments in comparing SD provision against international standards. These include the ACP visits and programme accreditation exercises where external academics and, in some cases, professionals are invited to engage in peer-review, and the reports of DAAs.

2.10   While noting a range of documents which guide aspects of programme quality assurance across the SDPUs, the Panel found that there was no comprehensive framework of policies and procedures, codifying programme development, programme review or benchmarking. Documentation to advise on development of new SD programmes is confined to flow charts and some supporting information on the quality assurance web pages. The formal guidance on SD programme review is confined to information on implementing revisions to a programme rather than systematic internal and external review of SD programmes to identify areas for improvement. In this context, the Panel encourages the University to consider extending its policy framework to ensure there are comprehensive formal policies and procedures covering planning, development, monitoring, and review.

2.11   Each SDPU has mechanisms in place at the School level to ensure that programme reports promote quality enhancement. For example, in SCE all monitoring reports are prepared and deliberated on by Programme Management Committees, Programme Boards, SCE's Quality Assurance Committee and/or SCE's School Board before being sent to University committees for consideration and approval. There is now a requirement to follow up on implementation and outcomes of any actions from the previous year in annual reports. This is monitored by QASC. However, the Panel formed the view that quality enhancement would be strengthened with a more systematic approach to reporting on those KPIs which relate to SDPUs. This will be addressed further in Section 8.

2.12   The Panel concluded that there is a culture of quality in the SDPUs which undertake programme development, monitoring and review in accordance with expected processes. The new template for annual reporting has promoted a more consistent approach although there is some scope for the University to further strengthen annual monitoring across the SDPUs. While QASC undertakes its role effectively, oversight from senior committees could be stronger. Use is made of DAAs and other external advisors to enable international benchmarking.

3. CURRICULUM DESIGN, PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESSES

3.1   The University's approach to the design, development and approval of the SD curriculum is based on SDPUs' application of University-wide principles in developing programmes that reflect alignment between University and SDPU strategic plans. These principles require SDPUs to offer programmes of good quality that respond to community needs, are cost-effective, take account of the needs of students for both personal development and aspirations for further study and/or employment, the market, and government policies. All SDPU programmes are expected to adopt Outcomes-based Teaching and Learning (OBTL) and criterion referenced assessment (CRA) as approved by Senate in 2012 for implementation from 2013/14.

3.2   The University distinguishes between the approval processes for SDPU programmes at QF Level 4 and those at Levels 1-3. Whilst both are developed within the SDPU and require SDPU Board approval, the former requires in principle consideration by the Academic Development Committee (ADC) of Senate prior to the detailed approval process, and then subsequent sequential approval of the programme by the SDPU Board, QASC, Quality Assurance Committee, and Senate. Approval of programmes at QF Levels 1-3 is delegated to the SDPU Board, and reported to QASC, Quality Assurance Committee and Senate through the SDPU's annual report. For QF Level 4 programme of 15 units or less, only the General Framework requires the full stages of approval; SDPUs have delegated authority to approve new programmes within that framework. Approval and formal accreditation processes require appropriate external inputs in the development process. As a self-accrediting institution, HKBU is responsible for uploading its approved programmes on the Hong Kong Qualifications Register (QR). SDPUs are expected to follow the Quality Assurance Protocol for programme approval which is based on the Quality Assurance Framework approved by Senate in February 2013 and which is presented in greater detail in Quality Assurance pages of the University's website.

3.3   SDPUs are responsible for the admission of students, working to the admissions requirements of the University and external bodies as appropriate. The preparation of marketing and promotional materials is the responsibility of SDPUs, supported by the University's Communication and Public Relations Office (CPRO).

3.4   The Panel tested the effectiveness of HKBU's arrangements for curriculum design, development and approval processes for its SD operations by scrutinising relevant documentation provided by the University and its SDPUs, particularly the Institutional Submission and the individual submissions prepared by each of the four SDPUs. The Panel followed detailed audit trails

of the development of two programmes and viewed the University website and various programme promotional materials.

3.5 In addition, the Panel discussed the programme approval arrangements with University senior managers, senior SDPU leaders, SD programme leaders, and staff teaching SD programmes. The Panel discussed admissions arrangements and the preparation of programme publicity materials with SDPU staff, representatives of the Student Admissions Office and the CPRO, as well as full-time and part-time students of SD programmes.

3.6 The Panel reviewed examples of programme development at QF Levels 1-3 and Level 4 and noted that SDPUs follow the arrangements shown in the Protocol for programme approval. All proposals are developed by Programme Planning Teams (PPTs) in the light of likely demand, and advice from external academic and industry representatives. For example, the development and accreditation process of an additional option in Geography and Resources Management on CIE's Level 4 Concentration Studies AD programme followed the programme approval and development policy, with University-level scrutiny via ADC, QASC, Quality Assurance Committee and Senate, as well as the relevant SDPU Board. The proposal prepared by the PPT was considered by the CIE Curriculum Development Committee, with the advice of two external experts before receiving approval in turn from the Programme Management Committee, inputs from the CIE Programme Board, the CIE School Board, and the Accreditation Panel prior to submission to QASC (which required minor modifications), then to the Quality Assurance Committee and finally by Senate. The Diploma of College Foundation Studies offered by SCE is an example of a QF Levels 1-3 programme prepared under the delegated approval authority vested in SDPUs. This was developed by a PPT, for initial discussion by the Continuing and Professional Education Heads Core Group meeting. Following revision, inputs were received from three external reviewers, and a revised proposal (together with the externals' comments and the PPT's responses) was considered through various internal School bodies – the Division Academic Management Committee, the Academic Planning and Development Committee, and the Continuing and Professional Education Programme Board. The proposal was formally approved by the Continuing Education School Board in April 2014 and launched in the autumn of 2015. QASC, Quality Assurance Committee and Senate were advised of the programme via the SDPU's annual report to QASC for 2015/16.

3.7 In 2016, Senate approved arrangements for the uploading of HKBU's SD programmes on QR. These include scrutiny by QASC appointed panels to confirm that the Secretariat be empowered to compile a consolidated submission to the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications for uploading programme details to QR. The Panel learned that Programme Directors are responsible for proposing the uploading

of their programme through the Secretariat which receives advice from one of two specialist panels convened to ensure that programmes meet University criteria for entry to the QR. The University may wish to promote these criteria more widely to ensure a fuller understanding of the arrangements at all levels.

3.8 The University's admissions criteria for programmes not covered under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System are determined with reference to the QF levels of individual SD programmes. CIE and AF have special admission schemes respectively for "talented students" and students over 25 who have had previous experience in film production. The overall approach involves an initial consideration of the applicant's academic qualifications, followed by written tests and interviews, which may take account of an applicant's creative works. However, there is variation among the SDPUs in their approaches to documenting admissions requirements (and sometimes among programmes within individual SDPUs), and selection procedures. SCE distinguishes separate requirements and mechanisms for its HD and other programmes; DCPE provides details taken from Programme Documents for each of its seven programmes; CIE's admissions document is in 14 detailed sections including the selection criteria and processes for different categories of applicants, complaints and appeals arrangements, and re-admissions arrangements; AF summarises clearly stated entry criteria and selection processes. The University is suggested to consider greater standardisation in statements on admissions requirements across SDPUs, with the admissions documentation incorporating entry requirements determined by appropriate external agencies as well as the SDPU's entrance requirements.

3.9 Following programme approval, SDPUs prepare their promotional and marketing materials with the support of CPRO. The latter's role is primarily to advise on corporate branding and other elements of University guidance, with the range, targets and content of materials being the responsibility of the SDPU. SDPUs are increasingly proactive in devising materials and activities, particularly relating to social media. DCPE markets its highly specialist programmes itself via a variety of outlets, including public presentations on Chinese medicine. The CIE Admissions Committee arranges a programme of Information Talks to local secondary schools. There is particularly strong liaison between CPRO and SCE which has its own Public Relations and Communication Section.

3.10 The outcomes of programme development activities are reported through School Board annual reports to QASC. For example, the annual reports for 2015/16 include lists of new programmes and those with significant changes, and, in its summary report to Quality Assurance Committee, QASC noted in particular the development of four new Concentration Studies programmes in CIE, the wide engagement of external professional inputs to programme development in SCE, DCPE's intention to develop higher QF level programmes, and that the revised HD programmes offered by AF should have

been included in the report despite their having been approved in the previous year. In considering the QASC summary report, the Quality Assurance Committee resolved to submit the report to Senate in full, together with the individual SDPU annual reports. The revised annual reporting template for use from 2016/17 onwards requires SDPUs to report on all programmes, including those recently developed. As stated in paragraph 1.6, the Panel formed the view that there is scope to strengthen governance arrangements to ensure that the Quality Assurance Committee and Senate are appropriately informed about SD activities.

3.11   The Panel noted that Senate confirmed receipt of the QASC report and the individual SDPU annual reports without necessarily considering them although these reports would be the first opportunity for Senate to receive notification of the development and/or formal approval during the previous year of new SD programmes at QF Levels 1-3 bearing the University's SDPU award. Although the uploading of programmes to the QR by the QASC Secretariat, on the advice of one of the two specialist Standing Panels, allows technical checks, such as titles, to programmes approved at the SDPU level, there is currently no opportunity for the Quality Assurance Committee or Senate to intervene in the approval process for QF Levels 1-3 programmes. The Panel notes that the proposed changes, referred to in paragraph 1.7, would enable the University to maintain oversight of proposals, including comments from external advisors, for all new SD programmes at the planning stage.

3.12   The Panel confirmed that the OBTL approach involving the close alignment of Course and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) appears to be fully embedded within SDPU programmes offered by AF, CIE and SCE. The University noted during its preparation for the Audit that this was not the case in DCPE, although DCPE teaching staff reported that the approach had been adopted less formally and confirmed that OBTL is being introduced in the current academic year. This will be discussed further in Section 6.

3.13   Students whom the Panel met reported that they consulted the University's website when seeking both general and specific information about programmes, and how to apply for them. Full-time and part-time SD students noted that the information was clear, accessible and helpful, and included details of subject options and learning styles.

3.14   The Panel noted the care taken by SDPUs in ensuring that new and existing programmes are up-to-date and reflect community needs. In particular, PPTs usually take particular account of external academic, industry, professional body and community inputs into the development process, ensuring these views are shared within the SDPU and at QASC. Whilst SDPUs are very clear on their responsibilities for programme development, including the limitations of their delegated authority for programme planning and approval, they might benefit from sharing good practice in these activities and, with the support of

QASC, developing a greater commonality of approach across SDPUs, along the lines suggested by the University during its preparation for the QAC Audit.

3.15 Before 2016/17, the SDPU annual reports contained information on the number of students enrolled and attrition rates, with some commenting on progression rates. SDPUs reported in different ways and in varying degrees of details on these measures. However, the new annual report template, in use from 2016/17, requires the inclusion of standardised data on admissions to each year of the programmes, including enrolments, attrition rates, progression rates, and three-year trend data on these together with summary narratives. Whilst not all SDPUs submitted complete data sets and QASC noted errors in some of the calculations, the 2016/17 reports include significantly more information on admissions than the previous ones. Although it appeared to the Panel that Senate does not receive a full report on SDPU admissions, the enhancement of the annual reporting process provides an opportunity for the University to monitor admissions criteria and procedures and to facilitate the adoption of best practice across SDPUs.

3.16 The Panel noted the University's decision during its preparation for the Audit that QASC should oversee the immediate full implementation of OBTL to all DCPE programmes. There is much evidence of progress in this regard, showing the commitment of DCPE in meeting the University's requirements and the support from Centre for Holistic Teaching and Learning (CHTL) in providing staff development opportunities. The Panel therefore affirms DCPE's move, under the supervision of QASC, to implement OBTL for all new and existing programmes.

3.17 Overall, the Panel concluded that the University's arrangements for the development and approval of SD programmes, student admission criteria and practices and for the promotion of SD programmes are fit for purpose and are enhanced through the revised annual reporting requirements. However, the Panel felt that SDPUs would benefit from a greater consistency of the application of these arrangements across the Units, that Senate should have the opportunity of an early awareness of the possible development of SD programmes at QF Levels 1-3. The University as a whole would also benefit from a clear programme development policy into which the detailed procedural guidance notes might fit.

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

4.1 The University states that all programmes offered by its SDPUs are monitored periodically, innovative pedagogical approaches are encouraged, and the physical learning environment and learning support facilities are custom built and of high quality. For the monitoring of programme delivery, all SDPUs, as

previously noted, are required to submit an annual report to QASC, in addition to the periodic monitoring by DAAs and ACPs. Any consequent changes to programmes have to follow the University's programme amendment processes.

4.2 CHTL provides assistance to SDPUs on matters relating to pedagogies including the OBTL approach and other delivery methods. Mechanisms deployed to evaluate teaching effectiveness include CFQs, staff-student consultation meetings, and input from DAAs and ACPs.

4.3 Learning support facilities, including library resources, the on-line learning management system, and computer laboratories, for full-time AD and HD students are comparable to those of Ug students. Part-time SD students are provided with learning support on a "need basis". Feedback from students on learning facilities can be obtained through the CFQs, exit surveys and student consultation meetings.

4.4 The Panel tested the effectiveness of HKBU's arrangements for monitoring programme delivery, their pedagogies, and their learning environment by scrutinising relevant documentation provided by the University and its SDPUs, particularly the Institutional Submission, the individual submissions prepared by each of the four SDPUs, annual reports from SDPUs and reports of meetings of the SDPU School Boards and of QASC. In addition, the Panel discussed programme delivery with University senior managers, senior SDPU leaders, SD programme leaders, staff teaching SD programmes, representatives of academic support services, employers and alumni, and full-time and part-time students from SD programmes. The Panel also visited facilities at the Kowloon Tong, Shek Mun, and Wanchai campuses.

4.5 The Panel was able to confirm that programme delivery monitoring measures – annual reports, outcomes of the DAA scheme, and ACP visits – are followed by SDPUs (with the exception of SCE, where an ACP visit for HD programmes is still to be arranged). All changes to the approved features of programmes go through formal approval processes.

4.6 CHTL provided professional development for teaching staff when the OBTL approach was first introduced in 2010. With the exception of DCPE which commenced implementation in 2017/18, OBTL was promptly adopted across SDPUs, and ILOs were aligned with teaching and learning activities and assessment methods on SD programmes.

4.7 Measures to collect student feedback on programme delivery, including CFQs and staff-student consultation meetings, have been implemented in all SDPUs, although DCPE only commenced its graduate exit survey in August 2017.

4.8 Students whom the Panel met expressed their appreciation for the caring attitude of staff and the student-centred culture of the academic units in which

they study. This was corroborated by similar comments made by alumni, external advisors, representatives of professional bodies, employers and articulation partners from other tertiary education institutions. Part-time students and alumni who are in employment were of the opinion that the knowledge and skills acquired from their programme have been of value in promoting employability and developing suitability for further study. In this context, the Panel commends the SDPUs for their student-centred approach in teaching and learning and student development, which is highly appreciated by students and external stakeholders.

4.9 The Panel noted limited evidence on the extent to which new pedagogies, for example, on-line resources, flipped classrooms, problem-based learning, and case studies, are practised in SDPUs. Further, it was not evident that significant resources are provided to support these initiatives (for example, relevant laboratories and studios), nor that staff scholarly activities related to new pedagogies are provided. From meeting with staff and students, it appears that the practice of these innovative pedagogies is not common. The University is encouraged to plan for the wider adoption of innovative pedagogies across SDPUs.

4.10 The Panel was able to confirm that learning support provided to full-time SD students (at QF Level 4) is comparable to that of Ug students of UGC-funded programmes. Part-time SD students and students on programmes at QF Level 3 and below are provided with learning support on a "need basis". This leads to some inequity for part-time students with, for example, part-time certificate and diploma students at SCE being required to pay an additional fee for access to the University main library. This issue will be addressed further in Section 7.

4.11 The Panel visited facilities at the Kowloon Tong and Shek Mun campus sites (including the specialised facilities for AF and SCM), as well as a centre in Wanchai used to deliver SCE programmes for part-time students in work. The Panel noted the impressive standard of the facilities. The SCE resource library is small but adequate. The Panel observed that while some student surveys and staff-student consultation meetings touch on matters relating to the quality of facilities, there is no systematic student experience survey conducted on a regular basis, covering facilities, resources and scheduling at SDPUs. Thus, the Panel could not establish that data on the adequacy of teaching facilities, classroom configurations, Wi-Fi speed, and student learning commons availability, is collected and analysed. Similarly, the Panel found little data on student satisfaction with class scheduling. While the Panel found no evidence to suggest that class scheduling is a problem, systematic monitoring of timetabling in terms of spatial and temporal distribution of classes and the associated student satisfaction level would be useful. A comprehensive and systematic student experience survey conducted regularly covering all the above mentioned areas would be beneficial.

4.12   In terms of a commitment to improvement, the Panel found examples of pedagogical approaches being informed by CHTL and by an accreditation panel. The Panel also found evidence of effective use of staff and student feedback to inform improvements in programme delivery in CIE. There was also evidence that student feedback had informed improvements and increased student satisfaction relating to specialised equipment in AF. The Panel was able to confirm that SDPUs employ various methods to improve the quality of programme delivery.

4.13   The Panel found evidence of the efforts of SDPUs in monitoring major aspects of programme delivery, and the resulting improvements. The Panel noted the caring attitude of staff towards students, the student-centred culture of the SDPUs, and the high standard of teaching and learning support facilities. A more systematic survey of different aspects of students' experience and a definitive plan to encourage the wider adoption of innovative pedagogies would be beneficial.

5.   SUPPORT FOR TEACHING QUALITY, INCLUDING PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1   The University states that teaching quality is maintained across all academic programmes, regardless of funding source, by explicit and consistent policies and practices in relation to the recruitment, induction, evaluation, and professional development of teachers, and by continuous quality monitoring.

5.2   The Panel tested the effectiveness of the University's policies and practices relevant to staff recruitment, induction, evaluation and professional development support for SD operations, by scrutinising relevant documentation provided by the University and its SDPUs. This included the Institutional Submission and those for each of the SDPUs, and a full range of supplementary materials, including minutes of the Staff Affairs Committee, Procedures for the Recruitment of Part-time Teachers, CFQs, Class Visit Reports, minutes of Staff-Student Consultation Meeting, Induction Programme details, and Professional Development Workshop details and comments.

5.3   During the Audit Visit, the Panel took the opportunity to meet with senior University managers, members of relevant committees, including the Teaching and Learning Policy Committee (TLPC), Quality Assurance Committee, and QASC, and academic leaders of the SDPUs with regard to the oversight, delegated responsibility, and implementation support of policies in relation to staff recruitment, induction, evaluation and professional development support, and held discussions with SD programme leaders and teachers regarding the implementation of these policies.

5.4   The University has a robust measure for gauging teaching effectiveness in its CFQ which engages students in regular evaluation of their learning experiences

and the quality of the teaching they experience. CFQs are administered centrally with each SDPU required to undertake analysis of its own data in the annual report to QASC. Results are shared with departments and followed up by QASC in an effective quality cycle.

5.5   Recruitment follows a standardised process that is adhered to across SDPUs and induction is a requirement for all new SDPU staff. Staff development needs are identified systematically, on the basis of feedback on staff teaching collected through CFQs and performance management annual reporting. Emerging data is monitored in the light of University objectives and global and local trends in teaching and learning, such as OBTL and CRA.

5.6   A range of staff development opportunities and forms of support are offered across the SDPUs. There is support for teaching quality through orientation, on-going professional development activities and sharing sessions run by CHTL, as well as by SDPUs themselves, and in-class visits and coaching. As indicated in Section 3, the Panel noted that SDPUs are progressing at somewhat different rates in terms of implementing pedagogic change, such as OBTL. The Panel also heard evidence that part-time staff in some SDPUs face challenges in regard to accessing and exploiting professional development opportunities, although, as far as possible, the University attempts to adopt the same approach to part-time teaching staff as they do to full-time teachers.

5.7   In summary, the Panel was able to confirm that the University has centrally administered policies and systems in place with students' evaluation of their experience of learning and teaching, through CFQs, helping assure teaching quality. Further, enhancement of teaching quality is supported through the provision of focused professional development support, both by CHTL and SDPUs themselves.

5.8   While there is evidence that SDPUs are progressing at somewhat different rates in terms of implementing pedagogic change, such as OBTL, and while the Panel understands that part-time staff face some challenges in regard to accessing and exploiting professional development opportunities, it came to the view that SDPU staff are well supported with various professional development opportunities which are implemented effectively. The Panel therefore commends the University for its strong support for the professional development of staff across SDPUs.

5.9   The Panel concludes that there is evidence of alignment between University and SDPU policies and practices in relation to recruitment, induction, evaluation and professional development of staff, irrespective of whether they are administered centrally or locally. Key policies and procedures, for example for staff recruitment and induction operate consistently across SDPUs. Student evaluation of their learning experience is administered centrally across SDPUs

and is analysed and addressed. While some initiatives are developing more gradually, professional development for SDPU staff is well supported.

6. STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 At HKBU, assessment practices aim to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The University states that student learning is guided by the explicit and comprehensive Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning. The Policy is relevant to all University programmes, irrespective of funding source or level. Its implementation is monitored continuously. The Policy has guiding principles which: link assessment to ILOs (in line with the OBTL approach); use CRA; ensure that desired academic standards are maintained; enable robust and fair judgments about student performance which are fair and equitable.

6.2 The University is committed to ensuring that students are well informed regarding the goals and objectives of student learning assessment and all SDPUs are required to follow University policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct and academic appeals. HKBU has self-accrediting status and offers two different award certifications for SD programmes. The University certification process is followed for HKBU awards with responsibility for certification of the University's SDPU awards devolved to the relevant School.

6.3 The Panel examined the effectiveness of the University's assessment practices in relation to SD operations, by scrutinising documentation including the Institutional Submission, and the SDPU SEDs and appendices, as well as various other documents relevant to student assessment. The Panel requested an audit trail of documents to illustrate how the University planned, implemented and monitored the introduction of OBTL and CRA in two of its SDPUs, CIE and DCPE. These documents, particularly those provided by CIE and DCPE, enabled the Panel to test the effectiveness of the University's approach in this area.

6.4 The Panel also met with senior University managers, members of relevant committees, including TLPC, Quality Assurance Committee, and QASC, academic leaders of the SDPUs, and external advisors, with regard to their oversight, delegated responsibilities, and support of the assessment policy framework, and held discussions with students, alumni and teaching staff regarding implementation of aspects of the assessment policy. The Panel also observed examples of student project work outcomes.

6.5 The Panel confirmed that the adoption of OBTL and the use of CRA to improve the assessment of student learning has been a major focus of the University, and that the approach is effective in tracking learning progress and determining the attainment of ILOs. Staff indicated that this approach and its monitoring improved the SDPUs' consideration of assessment. As a result of

the self-review process, DCPE commenced planning and implementation of OBTL in 2017. The Panel was able to observe that CIE was early to plan the introduction of OBTL in 2010, conducted workshops to assist staff, utilised CHTL expertise to support implementation, and now monitors the effectiveness of the approach. The Panel accordingly commends the planning, implementation and monitoring of the adoption of OBTL and CRA in CIE programmes, which has improved the assessment of student learning.

6.6   The Panel found that many aspects of the Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning are well, albeit at times, differently, implemented across the SDPUs and teachers are committed to using assessment to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Students indicated that staff are supportive regarding assessment processes, provided timely and suitable feedback on assessment tasks. Overall, students are clear on learning objectives, assessment tasks, marking rubrics, and most assessment policies, regulations and procedures, and received this information through their teachers, orientation activities, student handbooks, course syllabi, programme documents and *Moodle* sites.

6.7   The Panel noted that information about, and implementation of, the appeal of grades procedure can lack clarity with students unaware of formal grade appeal processes and, in the case of one SDPU, it being unclear to whom students should submit their application for academic result reassessment. Further, implementation across SDPUs can be inconsistent with differing timelines for appeal submissions ranging from one to three weeks. Regarding academic honesty, whilst there is some good practice in the provision of information, training and detection, it is inconsistent across the SDPUs and there is inequitable access to electronic plagiarism detection systems across SDPUs and study modes. There is also inconsistent monitoring of outcomes of grade appeals and cases of academic dishonesty at SDPU level in part, as a result of a lack of consistency across the SDPUs in recording cases of plagiarism. The reporting of cases of academic dishonesty and grade appeals is by exception through annual and end of semester reports to QASC, meaning that analysis of trends to inform improvements does not occur. The Panel thus recommends that the University review its assessment policy with regard to appeal of grades and academic honesty, to ensure consistent and effective implementation, information provision to students, and reporting and monitoring systems, across the SDPUs.

6.8   The role and use of DAAs and assessment moderators, whilst valued, varies across SDPUs, with DCPE strengthening this system in 2017/18. The Panel confirmed that advice is acted upon to improve assessment practices, for example, with assessment instruments and mark moderation. It also established that moderation guidelines are provided in the Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning, some SDPUs had their own internal guidelines, and experienced staff are able to articulate operational processes. However, the Panel formed the view that there is some inconsistent

implementation across SDPUs and that the University may wish to consider strengthening operational guidance particularly for staff newer to moderation. It was also noted that the scope and nature of guidance provided to DAAs is undeveloped and does not ensure that their reports assist the department in benchmarking assessment practices to international standards. The Panel therefore recommends that the University develop more comprehensive operational guidance for DAAs to ensure that they are assisted in providing academic advice on assessment systems, including moderation and external marking, at the SDPUs.

6.9 The Panel confirmed that the University certification process is followed for HKBU awards and the certification of the University's SDPU awards occurs at School level under delegated authority of School Board with sign off by the relevant Dean of School.

6.10 The Panel confirmed that local systems, variously and particular to each SDPU, including Faculty and School Boards, Programme Management Committees and Boards, and Programme Directors and Coordinators, monitor the implementation of the Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning and address improvements. QASC currently provides the most comprehensive oversight of student assessment of learning and the Panel noted that University committees with responsibility for oversight of various aspects of the student assessment of learning, specifically Quality Assurance Committee for academic integrity matters, URC for appeals, and TLPC for overall implementation of the assessment policy, rely on QASC to fulfil this role.

6.11 SDPUs collect student feedback data variously through student consultations, graduate surveys, and a CFQ which has specific questions about assessment. Individual SDPUs collect data on aspects of how the Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning is implemented, for example, grade appeals and plagiarism although this is inconsistent across the SDPUs. The Panel confirmed that data regarding student results and grades are scrutinised, with varying attention to detail, within the individual SDPUs with the Programme Management Board or Committee playing a key role in this process. Annual programme reports and other data are aggregated and fed into the SDPU's annual reporting system, though the Panel noted that the current report template does not enable reporting and trend analysis of some areas of the Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning, for example, academic dishonesty and appeal of grades. As noted in paragraph 2.6, there is further scope to strengthen annual reporting systems.

6.12 As already indicated in paragraphs 6.10 and 6.11, there are various local systems of data collection employed to monitor the implementation of the Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning and which can be used to identify improvements to student learning assessment across the SDPUs. QASC undertakes a key monitoring role to identify improvements emerging

from programme reports and annual reports, which contain action plans with items relevant to the assessment of student learning. However, the Panel formed the view that a more comprehensive annual reporting of areas such as academic honesty and appeal of grades, will enable University committees, responsible for student assessment areas to more effectively execute their designated roles and promote improvements.

6.13   The development of the Institutional Submission identified that DCPE was yet to adopt OBTL and the use of CRA with the School's programmes and courses. The Panel confirmed that planning and implementation of this approach commenced in April 2017 and is well supported by CHTL processes. As noted in Section 3, DCPE is encouraged to continue with this implementation to improve the assessment of student learning.

6.14   Overall, the Panel concluded that the University's comprehensive policy for the assessment of student learning, along with its strategy to adopt OBTL with the use of CRA, have been important initiatives to support a common approach to assessment across the SDPUs that can enhance the quality of teaching and learning. There was much evidence, particularly from students, to demonstrate that individual SDPUs are committed to enhancing the effectiveness of assessment practices, albeit differently. The Panel noted that as a result of developing the Institutional Submission, the University had developed an improvement plan to ensure that adoption of OBTL and the use of CRA occurs across all SDPUs. The Panel concluded that improvements are required in operational guidance provided to external advisors, and the consistent and effective implementation and reporting of aspects of the Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning, specifically appeal of grades and academic honesty.

7. STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

7.1   The University's stated approach is to empower students to take part in the governance of their SD programmes; to solicit their feedback through multiple channels; to enrich their learning experience and to enhance their soft skills through the provision of a wide range of co-curricular activities (including awards and scholarships); and to develop and assess students' holistic development.

7.2   Students from SD programmes are appointed to programme and Senate committees. There is a wide range of co-curricular learning activities provided by SDPUs and centrally including overseas study tours. A wide range of support services are provided to SD students including special services for non-local students in CIE. Students' development is assessed using the Whole Person Development Inventory (WPDI), on an optional basis.

7.3   SDPUs pay for SD students to use University based services "using the University's financial policy and guidelines". CIE has established its own Student Development Centre to support their student engagement in a variety of areas including employment preparation activities, and counselling.

7.4   The Panel considered the effectiveness of HKBU's arrangements for student participation and student support services by scrutinising relevant documentation provided by the University and its SDPUs, particularly the Institutional Submission, the individual submissions prepared by each of the SDPUs, annual reports from SDPUs and reports of meetings of the SDPU School Boards and of QASC. In addition, the Panel discussed related matters with University senior managers, senior SDPU leaders, SD programme leaders, staff teaching SD programmes, representatives of academic support services, employers and alumni, and full-time and part-time students from SD programmes. The Panel also visited facilities at the Kowloon Tong, Shek Mun, and Wanchai campuses.

7.5   Students are represented in programme level committees for SCE and CIE. The latter has significant student representation on both academic and administrative boards and committees, including representation on Quality Assurance Committee. SCE has student representation on the Programme Board and QASC. AF has student representation on QASC and, since 2017/18, the Programme Management Committee. DCPE has only Student Consultation Meetings. University senior management confirmed that SD students are represented by student members of Senate. Students are appreciative of the approach to student representation.

7.6   The SDPUs have adopted differing approaches to organising student development activities. For example, CIE has been particularly active in developing students' soft skills and enriching learning activities, such as by including an international student exchange programme. CIE and SCE also attach importance to the development of students' language skills, for example, English Support Service and Consultation on English Language. DCPE focuses more on activities to enhance employment prospects such as clinical practicums, and community engagements. AF offers an impressive range of professional events to enrich the student learning experience, including overseas study tours, and employment preparation.

7.7   These development activities have evident value. For example, the WPDI Report 2015/16 showed that CIE participating students had gains in soft skill development; the language development programme for SCE HD students showed good student satisfaction and improved proficiency; and the activities organised by AF had very high student participation rates and high satisfaction levels. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a lack of a clear and consistent approach for SDPUs in determining the type of student development activities that should be offered. The Panel felt that some conceptual model

underpinning the selection of activities offered for different types of students would be helpful for SDPUs. A demonstration of how these activities contribute to the ILOs and Graduate Attributes would be similarly useful.

7.8   Currently, full-time AD and HD students are provided with learning support and whole person development services comparable to those of Ug students of UGC-funded programmes, and part-time students are provided with learning support only on a "need basis". For example, there is differing library access for part-time certificate and diploma students and the e-Learning platform, *Moodle*, is generally not granted to part-time SD students. The Panel noted that the number of part-time students registered for QF Level 4 programmes at close to 2 000 is considerable. The duration for most of these programmes is also quite substantial, ranging from around 100 hours to over 300 hours. The Panel was of the opinion that there is a need for part-time students to have access to the e-Learning platform as well as remote access to the e-resources of the library and other learning materials not least because of the limited time such students tend to spend on campus.

7.9   The University recognises that there is a lack of standardisation across SDPUs in terms of student representation, provision of co-curricular activities, and student learning and other support services, and has commenced discussions on some of these matters. However, the Panel noted that the evaluation of student services provision to determine its effectiveness and to inform improvement at SDPUs has not been undertaken in a systematic manner.

7.10   In the light of these findings, the Panel recommends that the University review the policy regarding support services for part-time students, in particular, their access to e-Learning platform and library resources, to ensure that the support available to them is comparable to their full-time counterparts.

7.11   The Panel concluded that there is student representation across many SDPU committees and that input from students has led to substantive improvements. However, the practice is not entirely uniform across SDPUs. The Panel noted HKBU's principle that full-time AD and HD students are provided with learning support and whole person development services comparable to those of Ug students of UGC-funded programmes. However, part-time SD students' lack of access to some facilities including the library and the e-Learning platform should be addressed. The Panel recognised the value of the many co-curricular activities being offered to SD students, and noted students' positive experience of these opportunities. The impact of these activities could be further enhanced with a more formal approach to guide the delivery of these programmes as well as a systematic evaluation of their effectiveness in terms of their contributing to the University's ILOs and Graduate Attributes.

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

8.1 The Institutional Submission cites the systematic use of trend data from graduate destination surveys and programme satisfaction (exit) surveys as key internal vehicles for ongoing programme improvement, coupled with responding to changes in the educational needs of the communities the University serves. The Panel noted that Section 8 of the Institutional Submission was silent on the adoption of other KPIs.

8.2 The Panel tested the effectiveness of HKBU's arrangements for continuing to ensure the quality of student learning through reflection and follow-up activities for its SD operations by scrutinising relevant documentation provided by the University and its SDPUs, particularly the Institutional Submission, the individual submissions prepared by each of the four SDPUs, annual reports from School Boards and reports of meetings of the SDPU School Boards and of the QASC.

8.3 In addition, the Panel discussed related matters with University senior managers, senior SDPU leaders, SD programme leaders, staff teaching SD programmes, representatives of academic support services, employers and alumni, and full-time and part-time students in SD programmes.

8.4 The Institutional Submission reports that AF, CIE and SCE use graduate destination and student satisfaction surveys, and whilst DCPE has recently adopted the latter, it is not currently using the former which it saw as non-essential as most of its students are in work. However, DCPE's 2016/17 Annual Report noted the introduction of a "graduate exit survey" in August 2017, although no data were available to the Panel. There is considerable variation among SDPUs on the gathering, portrayal and application of the data. For example, AF uses a standardised on-line questionnaire for both Ug and SD graduates; CIE uses a tailor-made questionnaire for use in telephone interviews; and SCE had devised its own web-based survey questionnaire. Response rates have increased over the 2014-2016 period, reaching between 79.1% and 85% in 2016. Whist the data for AF HD programmes show over 70% of respondents are in employment with up to 20% engaged in study, the results for CIE AD programmes show the opposite trend; data for the one year analysis of SCE HD programmes show 45% responding in each category. There is a range of student satisfaction surveys (known as "Graduate Exit Surveys" in CIE). AF noted significant discrepancies between the outcomes of these and the results of CFQs conducted during the course.

8.5 Apart from developing programmes that satisfy the University criteria of reflecting the needs of potential students, market needs, government policies and the desire for life-long learning, SDPUs need to ensure their programmes are financially sustainable as these are offered on a self-financing basis.

Accordingly, SDPUs phase out programmes for which there appears to be reducing market demand due to increased competition, replacing them with programmes reflecting student needs for higher qualifications, or re-branding programmes in the light of student and employer inputs. SDPUs appeared generally to be alive to the changing needs of their various communities and related closely to relevant employment sectors such as in the film, and Chinese medicine, the environment and business.

8.6   The University's Strategic Plan, *Vision 2020*, identifies "Quality Teaching and Learning" as one of three areas of strategic focus. Within this, it lists three strategic themes – enhancement of teaching and learning, provision of best value-addedness to HKBU students through excellent teaching and learning environment, and improvement in the attractiveness and agility of HKBU programmes for recruitment of high quality students. *Vision 2020* applies 25 KPIs, both quantitative and qualitative, across these three themes. Among these are results from graduate employment surveys and employers' satisfaction with HKBU graduates. The Panel noted a summary of the KPIs that specified which of these are used in the annual reports. However, the Panel learned that there is no University-wide guidance specifying how KPIs are to be interpreted by SDPUs and how they are collected and analysed; this was described as "work in progress".

8.7   The approaches adopted by the SDPUs to the collection and analysis of graduate surveys vary considerably. AF's exit surveys invite comments on detailed aspects of the programme using the graduation destination survey, conducted by the University's Office of Student Affairs (OSA), asking detailed questions on the type of employment, location, size of organisation, ease of gaining employment and comprehensive information from graduates in further study. SCE undertakes similar surveys, often presenting time series data through bar charts, whilst CIE reports its survey findings of graduation destinations and articulations data through a time series of coloured pie charts. In most cases, SDPUs invest much effort in seeking information about the programmes graduates have just completed and in learning of the destination of their graduates. From a University perspective, however, it is difficult to compare the results between programmes within and across SDPUs as the survey instruments are different and the outcomes reported in different ways. The Panel therefore recommends that the University review its exit and graduate surveys for SD students to ensure a greater consistency of approach. In this regard, the University might wish to disseminate to the SDPUs the good practice of AF's policy of using the OSA survey, customised by the addition of optional questions to reflect the particular characteristics of specialist SD programmes.

8.8   The Panel learned from graduates and employers that the HKBU programmes were up-to-date and relevant to their employment sectors, and that HKBU students were generally well suited to pursue further related studies at other

institutions. Staff cited changes to a Psychology programme, amendments to Chinese Medicine programmes and the introduction of good practice awards in the School of Communication as examples of changes introduced on the basis of feedback from graduates.

8.9   With regard to the use of the University's *Vision 2020* KPIs, the revised SDPU annual report templates, in use for reporting on 2016/17, require data and narratives on student enrolments, graduation rates, attrition rates, admissions qualifications data and outcomes of CFQ teaching evaluations. Three of the SDPUs provided detailed statistics, derived from a variety of survey instruments, in appendices with summary narratives in the annual report, with DCPE reporting its adoption of a graduate exit survey. More generally, not all the KPIs to be included in the annual reports are referred to, whilst others are addressed in varying ways by the SDPUs.

8.10   Graduate exit and destination surveys comprise a relatively small number of sources used by the SDPUs for programme enhancement, but they offer useful commentaries on the success of graduates in seeking employment, particularly in the vocational sectors to which the programmes relate. Coupled with the advice received from employers, professional bodies and other external experts, information from graduates contributes to the SDPU's understanding of changing student, business and societal needs to which the self-financing SD programmes respond.

8.11   The University, and QASC in particular, has recognised the benefit of graduation survey data by requiring its presentation in the SDPU annual reports from 2016/17 and by requiring DCPE to develop a graduate exit survey. QASC agreed that more trend data, illustrated by graphs and charts, could be included with a critical analysis on the areas for improvement and follow-up action plans. As noted in paragraph 8.7, however, the survey instruments adopted by the SDPUs are different and the data are presented in various ways. Whilst exceptionally, AF HD graduates are surveyed through the degree graduate questionnaire administered by the OSA, and the Academic Registry oversees the distribution of the CFQ, the responsibility for the collection and analysis of graduate data lies with individual SDPUs.

8.12   The Panel learned that the University intends over the next three years to introduce a new management information system and develop a "dashboard" approach to the portrayal and analysis of data. This provides the University with an opportunity to consider carefully which KPIs derived from the new Strategic Plan 2018-2028 would be most appropriate to assist with monitoring and enhancing SD programmes. The Panel recommends that the University clarify which KPIs should be used by SDPUs, enable relevant data to be collected centrally, and ensure that appropriate committees review, comment upon and compare detailed trend data from individual SD programmes and units.

8.13 Whilst the Panel acknowledged that SDPUs access a range of data to contribute to the review and enhancement of programmes, the University's attention to data derived from graduate exit and destination surveys is limited as their adoption, the survey instruments, methodology and reporting vary among the SDPUs. The revised annual report template provides a basis for the provision of consistent student satisfaction data, including graduate surveys. SDPUs collect meaningful information on the changing programme needs of the communities served by the University, though this is neither recorded nor reported in standardised form. The University's Strategic Plan, *Vision 2020,* lists a wide range of performance indicators, of which graduate employment surveys are one, but decisions on the scope and scale of graduate surveys and the responsibility for analysing and presenting resulting data currently reside within individual SDPUs.

9. CONCLUSIONS

9.1 The University is in the process of strengthening its arrangements for the oversight of SD provision. The establishment of SDPSC and ambitions for more systematic collection and analysis of relevant data should be able to help HKBU in this regard, not least in promoting greater consistency across SDPUs, and in promoting enhancements.

9.2 There is effective management of academic quality and standards within SDPUs, which undertake quality assurance in accordance with University expectations. QASC provided effective governance of SD provision through its monitoring of improved annual reports. DAAs and other external advisors enable international benchmarking. Arrangements for the development and approval of SD programmes, student admission criteria and practices and for the promotion of SD programmes are fit for purpose.

9.3 There is clear evidence of a student-centred culture and a caring attitude towards students. Teaching and learning support facilities are suitable with the majority of SD students enjoying learning support and whole person development services comparable to those of Ug students. Student representation has led to substantive improvements. A range of valuable co-curricular activities are on offer to SD students.

9.4 The University has successfully implemented OBTL and CRA across three of the SDPUs and is in the process of introducing them at the fourth. Professional development for SDPU staff, including with respect to OBTL, is well supported.

APPENDIX A: HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY (HKBU)
[Information provided by the University]

History

Hong Kong Baptist College was founded in 1956 with a mission to provide liberal arts education built upon the Christian heritage for the young people of Hong Kong. It became Government-funded in 1983 and started offering undergraduate degree programmes in 1986, followed by taught postgraduate programmes, with research postgraduate programmes instituted between 1988 and 1992. The institution was granted self-accrediting status in 1993 and attained University status in November 1994. In 1998, Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) set up the School of Chinese Medicine (SCM) and in 2004, the Academy of Visual Arts, both first in Hong Kong. A year later, the University joined hands with Beijing Normal University (BNU) to establish in Zhuhai the BNU-HKBU United International College, the first mainland liberal arts college in partnership with a Hong Kong university. Through a donation from the Government Film Development Fund, the University's Department of Cinema and Television was upgraded to become the Academy of Film (AF) in 2009.

Vision and Mission

Vision

To be a leading liberal arts University in Asia for the world delivering academic excellence in a caring, creative and global culture.

Mission

HKBU is committed to academic excellence in teaching, research and service, and to the development of the whole person in all these endeavours built upon the heritage of Christian higher education.

Role Statement

HKBU:

(a) offers a range of programmes leading to the award of first degrees in Arts, Business, Chinese Medicine, Communication Studies, Education, Science and Social Sciences;

(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;

(d) follows a holistic approach to higher education and emphasizes a broad-based creativity-inspiring undergraduate education, which inculcates in all who participate a sense of human values;

(e)   aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength, and in particular in support of teaching;

(f)   maintains strong links with the community;

(g)   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;

(h)   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

(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 Units

There are four Sub-degree Providing Units (SDPUs) in the University and the summary information on the sub-degree (SD) programmes offered is as follows:

QF Level	No. of programmes			No. of students		
	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total
4	39	47	86	3 561	1 947	5 508
1 - 3	18	31	49	739	719	1 458
Total	**57**	**78**	**135**	**4 300**	**2 666**	**6 966**

The School of Continuing Education (SCE) offers Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) Levels 1 to 4 SD programmes to serve the working public, including Higher Diploma (HD) programmes. The College of International Education (CIE), under the SCE, offers Associate Degree programmes, providing school leavers with an articulation path to undergraduate studies. AF, under the School of Communication, offers HD programmes that train professionals for the film industry. The Division of Continuing and Professional Education of the School of Chinese Medicine (SCM-DCPE) offers QF Levels 1 to 4 SD programmes to train professional/technical personnel in the field of Chinese medicine.

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
AF	4	60	337	7
SCE	27	382	884	2 229
CIE	88	87	3 079	0
SCM-DCPE	10	21	0	430

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT FINDINGS

1. Hong Kong Baptist University thanks the UGC-QAC for conducting the first quality audit on its SD operations. We would like to convey our deepest appreciation to the Audit Panel for its valuable comments and suggestions. The audit has provided an opportunity for further enhancement of the University's SD programmes.

2. The University welcomes the remarks in the Audit Report (Report) that its SD operations are aligned with the University's strategic priorities, that SDPUs exhibit a quality culture, and that there is effective management of quality and standards within SDPUs. To further strengthen the governance of SD operations, the University Senate has, on 4 December 2017, approved the setting up of a formalised management structure that will provide greater oversight and better coordination of the University's portfolios of SD programmes, particularly with regard to setting strategic priorities and enhanced monitoring of the Levels 1-3 programmes. We will continue to refine the terms of reference for the new SDPSC and the second QASC to enhance the clarity of their roles, responsibilities and reporting lines, as well as review the role of Quality Assurance Committee in its oversight of SD matters.

3. The Report concluded that the University's arrangements for the development and approval of SD programmes, student admission criteria and practices, and the promotion of SD programmes are fit-for-purpose. It commended HKBU staff's caring attitude and the student-centred culture in teaching, learning and student development. Nonetheless, we will continue to strengthen programme delivery by reviewing the overall policy framework of and governance system for SD operations. Moreover, we will standardise policies and practices among SDPUs, in areas such as collection of student feedback, and engagement of external advisors in new programme approval and for international benchmarking.

4. While the Report confirmed that the University has a robust system for assessing teaching effectiveness and student learning experience, we will adopt a more systematic and consistent approach to the collection and analysis of data and evidence for programme outcomes to enhance monitoring and benchmarking. Furthermore, we will examine our assessment policy with regard to appeal of grades and academic honesty, to make implementation and reporting more consistent among SDPUs. We will also review our graduate surveys, which are already in place among all SDPUs, to ensure a greater consistency of approach to allow for comparisons among SDPUs. (see also par. 9)

5. The University welcomes the Report's commendation on its support for the professional development of staff across SDPUs. We will further strengthen the support through devising measures to encourage the wider adoption of innovative pedagogies among SDPUs, and will provide more professional development

opportunities for part-time teachers.

6. The Report noted the role and use of external advisors (Departmental Academic Advisors (DAAs)) in supporting SD programmes. To further enhance their effectiveness, we will develop more comprehensive operational guidance for DAAs to assist them in providing academic advice on assessment systems.

7. The Report recognised the value of the many co-curricular activities being offered to SD students, and noted students' positive experience of these opportunities. Nevertheless, we will continue to improve student learning experience by taking a more strategic view of these programmes, and will evaluate how they contribute to the achievement of Intended Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes.

8. The Report found the University's teaching and learning support facilities for SD programmes to be of high standard. To better cater for the evolving needs of part-time students in particular, we will review the policy regarding support services for this group.

9. The Report noted the use of various KPIs in the SDPU annual reports. We will examine the KPIs adopted by SDPUs and also those listed in the University's newly released *Strategic Plan 2018-2028*, and determine which ones are relevant to SD programmes, so as to achieve standardisation among SDPUs in the collection of data for analysis and monitoring by relevant committees. To aid the process, the University will set up an institutional research system.

10. The University will continue to deliver quality SD programmes that provide different types of learners with multiple pathways for higher education, career development and personal advancement.

APPENDIX C: ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMNS

ACP	Academic Consultation Panel
AD	Associate Degree
ADC	Academic Development Committee
AF	Academy of Film
CFQ	Course Feedback Questionnaire
CHTL	Centre for Holistic Teaching and Learning
CIE	College of International Education
CPRO	Communication and Public Relations Office
CRA	Criterion referenced assessment
DAA	Departmental Academic Advisor
DCPE	Division of Continuing and Professional Education
HD	Higher Diploma
HKBU	Hong Kong Baptist University
HKQF	Hong Kong Qualifications Framework
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
OBTL	Outcomes-based Teaching and Learning
OSA	Office of Student Affairs
PPTs	Programme Planning Teams
QR	Qualifications Register
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
QASC	Quality Assurance Sub-Committee on Sub-degree Programmes
SCE	School of Continuing Education
SCM	School of Chinese Medicine
SD	Sub-degree
SDPSC	Sub-Degree Programmes Steering Committee
SDPU	Sub-degree Providing Unit
SEDs	Self-evaluation documents
TLPC	Teaching and Learning Policy Committee
WPDI	Whole Person Development Inventory
Ug	Undergraduate
UGC	University Grants Committee
URC	Undergraduate Regulations Committee

APPENDIX D: HKBU AUDIT PANEL

The Audit Panel comprised the following:

Emeritus Professor Joan Cooper (Panel Chair)
Higher Education Consultant
Emeritus Professor, University of New South Wales

Professor Grahame Bilbow
Director of the Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, The University of Hong Kong

Emeritus Professor Peter Bush
Higher Education Consultant
Emeritus Professor, The University of Northampton

Emeritus Professor Deborah Clayton
Higher Education Consultant
Emeritus Professor, Central Queensland University

Professor Peter Yuen
Dean of the College of Professional and Continuing Education, The Hong Kong Polytechnic 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 September 2018)

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