

Third Audit Cycle of the Quality Assurance Council

Report of Quality Audit of City University of Hong Kong

October 2024

Quality Assurance Council



**Quality Assurance Council
Third Audit Cycle**

**Report of Quality Audit of
City University of Hong Kong**

October 2024

QAC Audit Report Number 28

© Quality Assurance Council 2024

7/F, Shui On Centre
6-8 Harbour Road
Wanchai
Hong Kong
Tel: 2524 3987
Fax: 2845 1596

ugc@ugc.edu.hk

<http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/qac/index.html>

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

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
PREFACE	1
Background	1
Conduct of QAC Quality Audits	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
Summary of the principal findings of the Audit Panel	3
INTRODUCTION	7
Explanation of the audit methodology	7
Introduction to the University and its role and mission	7
1. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC QUALITY	8
2. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL, MONITORING AND REVIEW	12
3. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING	16
4. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT	20
5. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS	23
6. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USAGE OF DATA	26
7. CONCLUSIONS	29
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A: CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG	32
APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT FINDINGS	35
APPENDIX C: ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	38
APPENDIX D: CITYU AUDIT PANEL	40
APPENDIX E: QAC'S MISSION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP	41

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.

The 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, the QAC was established to assist the UGC in providing third-party oversight of the quality of the universities' educational provision. The QAC aims to assist the UGC in assuring the quality of programmes (however funded) offered by UGC-funded universities.

Since its establishment, the QAC has conducted three rounds of quality audits, the first audit cycle between 2008 and 2011, the second audit cycle between 2015 and 2016 and the sub-degree (SD) audit cycle between 2017 and 2019. By virtue of the QAC's mission prior to 2016, the first and second audit cycles included only first degree level programmes and above offered by the UGC-funded universities. Following the Government's recognition of the need for greater systematisation and externality in monitoring the quality of SD level programmes, as well as the recommendations from a Working Group comprising representatives from the UGC, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications and the Heads of Universities Committee, the Government gave policy support for and invited the UGC to be the overseeing body of the quality audits of UGC-funded universities' SD operations with the QAC as the audit operator in 2016.

Conduct of QAC Quality Audits

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

- the conduct of universities' quality audits
- the promotion of quality assurance (QA) and enhancement and the spread of good practices

Audits are undertaken by Audit Panels appointed by the QAC from its Register of Auditors. An Audit Panel consists of four members, including two local members with a background in the Hong Kong higher education system and two non-local members with extensive and senior experience of quality and academic standards. Lay members may also be appointed where it is deemed appropriate.

The QAC's approach to quality audit is based on the principle of 'fitness for purpose'. Audit Panels assess the extent to which universities are fulfilling their stated mission and purpose and confirm the procedures in place for assuring the quality of the learning

opportunities offered to students and the academic standards by which students' level of performance and capability are assessed and reported. The QAC Audit also examines the effectiveness of a university's quality systems and considers the evidence used to demonstrate that these systems meet the expectations of stakeholders.

Full details of the audit procedures, including the methodology and scope of the audit, are provided in the QAC Third Audit Cycle Audit Manual which is available at <https://www.ugc.edu.hk/doc/eng/qac/manual/auditmanual3.pdf>.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the report of a quality audit of City University of Hong Kong (CityU; the University) by an Audit Panel appointed by, and acting on behalf of, the QAC. The report presents the findings of the quality audit, supported by detailed analysis and commentary on the Audit Criteria below as well as the Audit Theme on ‘Collection, Analysis and Usage of Data’.

- How effectively does the university review and enhance its framework for managing academic standards and academic quality?
- How effectively does the university review and enhance its arrangements for programme development and approval, monitoring and review?
- How effectively does the university review and enhance teaching and learning (T&L)?
- How effectively does the university review and enhance student learning assessment?
- How effectively does the university review and enhance its arrangement for supporting students?

The audit findings are identified as features of good practice and recommended actions for further consideration by the University.

Summary of the principal findings of the Audit Panel

1. Review and enhancement of the University’s framework for managing academic standards and academic quality

The Audit Panel found that the University’s academic activities and operational methods align with its strategic objectives. The Quality Assurance Framework and a comprehensive range of quality assurance policies and procedures are set out in the Quality Manual and the Panel found that its quality methodology is well suited to the University’s aims and purposes. There is an appropriate and multi-layered academic governance structure in place. Senate is chaired by the President and acts as the senior academic committee with ultimate responsibility for the oversight and maintenance of academic quality and standards. The University’s mission to nurture students in applied knowledge and social development is set out in its Strategic Plan, well documented in key processes and reflected in the growing number of professionally accredited programmes. The Audit Panel found a strong data-driven approach to the oversight of student performance, academic standards and the quality of programmes. Academic standards are set in the context of the University’s implementation of outcomes-based teaching and learning (OBTL) with outcomes clearly related to graduate attributes. The Audit Panel found that the University systematically and effectively benchmarks student outputs and standards against other Hong Kong institutions and comparator universities globally, as well as with industry, to promote quality assurance and enhancement.

2. Review and enhancement of the University's arrangements for programme development and approval, monitoring and review

CityU has established a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that support new programme development and approval as well as the monitoring and review of programmes. There is well-articulated documentation to support these processes which are robust and rigorous in their application across the University. The academic community in Colleges, Schools and School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE) share a sense of ownership and understanding about these arrangements, as do the governance committees of the University which carry responsibility for the scrutiny and oversight of CityU's academic profile. Notable among the features of new programme design is the engagement with professional bodies and external stakeholders such as prospective employers and other industry partners. Similarly, there is a high priority placed on the views of these stakeholders during annual cyclical reviews which are informed by comprehensive collections of centrally-managed performance data. The University pays particular attention to the alignment of curriculum design with OBTL. The Audit Panel recognises that a distinctive and successful feature of CityU's approach is the flexibility it brings to programme design such that students are provided with considerable scope to complement their interests in a professionally-accredited education with personalised opportunities to pursue elective options across various disciplines, in research project work, in workplace learning and internships and through international exchange arrangements. The number of students who avail themselves of these opportunities is noteworthy.

3. Review and enhancement of teaching and learning

The Audit Panel noted the balance struck between holistic and professional education, with the extensive array of professional programmes offered while ensuring all students receive a comprehensive education. The University's policies and governance procedures are effectively aligned with its Learning and Teaching Strategy. Particularly noteworthy is the implementation of a 'personalised learning' approach, facilitated by a diverse range of curricular options, practice-based learning opportunities, and co-curricular programmes. A comprehensive range of mechanisms to evaluate the quality of T&L include Teaching and Learning Questionnaire (TLQ) for individual courses and a Student Learning Experience Survey (SLES) conducted at the end of each academic year. Graduate Employment Survey (GES) and the Alumni Tracer Study are regularly conducted to monitor graduate employability and assess the overall effectiveness of the learning experience. The responsibility for ensuring the quality of T&L within individual courses and programmes lies with the Dean/Head of the relevant Academic Unit (AU), while the Office of the Provost and Deputy President holds the ultimate responsibility for monitoring T&L enhancement. The University could benefit from proactive synthesis and comprehensive usage of its T&L data at institutional level to identify thematic issues and promote good practice. The University demonstrates some innovative T&L approaches, exemplified by the integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) into its programmes, supported by clear policy

guidelines for both teachers and students. The Panel also noted the dedication to supporting young faculty members through a structured mentorship programme and Teaching Start-up Grant support. The University effectively utilises online technology to enhance course delivery. The recently established Digital Learning Task Force and the proposal for building team-based learning classrooms further underscore the institution's commitment to educational innovation. Additionally, the Panel recognises SCOPE's robust assurance system for its self-funded programmes and the University's strong support for research postgraduate (RPg) students, exemplified by the implementation of a qualifying examination for doctoral candidates to enhance student readiness for thesis study.

4. Review and enhancement of student learning assessment

The University has established a clear and comprehensive assessment policy. It vests significant autonomy at the AU level in Colleges and Schools and SCOPE to build assessment rubrics and practices that not only align with course and programme learning objectives and graduate attributes, but also deliver a 'fit for purpose' flexibility for course and programme leaders. Documentation to support this approach is clear and transparent, as are the practices used to inform students of assessment expectations through their programme orientation and at the start of courses. Regular external benchmarking of these practices, particularly as they relate to OBTL, have provided confidence that the existing framework is not only robust, but also flexible in its methodologies. Avenues for moderation and appeals are well documented. A similar transparency exists with respect to the induction and deployment of assessment policies as they impact RPg students.

5. Review and enhancement of the University's arrangement for supporting students

The Audit Panel confirmed that CityU is committed to providing comprehensive and effective support services to students at all levels. The University has defined four core principles to support and improve students on their programmes and in the wider community. These apply across the student experience from induction, progression and personal development to graduation and employment. All policies and schemes for orientation, progression monitoring, counselling, internship and global study, and employment are developed based on these principles. There is a diverse set of student orientation programmes, including the University Welcoming Ceremony and the University Life Induction Day, with customised orientation for local, non-local and exchange students. Relevant websites and student handbooks are informative, allowing students to easily find required information. CityU provides strong support for students' personal, professional and academic development. The Panel observed that the University proactively and successfully invites 'at risk' students, including those requiring mental health support, to seek advice from counsellors. The University's inclusive learning environment for all offers a wide range of activities and workshops for non-local and exchange students so as to smoothly integrate them into the University. Various international cross-cultural learning opportunities are provided for students at

all levels through partner institutions in over 45 countries/regions. The University actively seeks student feedback via multiple channels, including ‘Chatting with the Dean of Students (DoS)’ and the Academic Advising Scheme. While the Scheme is an effective way to collect students’ feedback and needs, it could be more comprehensively and consistently implemented across all AUs to ensure that academic advising is undertaken in line with institutional policy. All in all, the Panel concluded that CityU provides strong support to students throughout their time at and beyond the University.

6. The Audit Theme – Collection, analysis and usage of data

The University’s Strategic Plan prioritises the collection, analysis and use of data in its decision-making processes. The Audit Panel found a developing culture and practice of using data to deliver measurable outcomes. The Data Strategy has clear objectives and guidance, and is underpinned by the Data Governance Policy, to ensure common practice and data security. The Audit Panel learned that the University uses locally collected and stored data to enhance T&L, including in the Annual Report which AUs submit to the Provost, but is moving towards shifting all locally collected and stored data to a central data base overseen by the Office of the Chief Information Officer, with a view to strengthening collection, analysis and use of data. Data and related reports, housed on a series of dashboards, are shared with AUs for review and action. Data Stewards are in place to ensure ownership and accountability. The Audit Panel found increasing use of data literacy training programmes for both staff and students, with the latter being embedded in the curriculum to equip students with necessary transferable skills. The 2022 launch of Executive Analytics has provided a one stop shop for focused analysis of performance data relating to education, research and finance. The University sets and uses key performance indicators (KPI) to help meet the institutional vision, mission and strategic focus, for example in measuring achievement of graduate outcomes. There is effective use of various sources of data to establish international benchmarks in development of the academic portfolio and identification of external experts in review processes. The Panel noted that the University regularly reviews and reflects on the effectiveness of data collection and usage.

INTRODUCTION

Explanation of the audit methodology

This is the report of a quality audit of CityU by an Audit Panel appointed by, and acting on behalf of, the QAC. It is based on a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) which was prepared by CityU and submitted to QAC on 16 October 2023. Initial Private Meetings of Panel members were held on 19 and 20 December 2023 to plan for the audit visit and this was followed on 22 December 2023 by a Preparatory Meeting with the University to discuss the detailed arrangements.

The Audit Panel was able to scrutinise a range of relevant documentation provided by the University, including its SER and Appendices, the Core Information, Audit Trail documentation, and additional information provided before and during the Audit Visit.

The Audit Panel conducted an Audit Visit with CityU between 21 February and 4 March 2024. Panel members met with the President and his senior team; a representative group of students on taught programmes; a representative group of RPg students; academic managers including Deans and Heads of AUs; a group of academic staff including programme leaders; RPg managers and supervisors; external stakeholders; and staff from academic support services.

The Audit Panel evaluates:

- How effectively does the university review and enhance its framework for managing academic standards and academic quality?
- How effectively does the university review and enhance its arrangements for programme development and approval, monitoring and review?
- How effectively does the university review and enhance T&L?
- How effectively does the university review and enhance student learning assessment?
- How effectively does the university review and enhance its arrangement for supporting students?

The Panel identifies its audit findings, including features of good practice and recommended actions for further consideration by the University.

Introduction to the University and its role and mission

CityU was founded in 1984 as City Polytechnic of Hong Kong and was granted full University status in 1994. The University's vision is for CityU to become a leading global university, excelling in research and professional education, while the institutional mission is to nurture and develop students' talents and to create applicable knowledge for social and economic advancement. The University's approach aims to be embedded in core values of excellence, honesty, freedom of enquiry, accountability,

civility and collegiality. The values also underpin CityU's Strategic Plan for 2020–2025, World-class Research and Education (the Strategic Plan).

The University comprises five Colleges and five Schools, one of which is the Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies (SGS), with 28 constituent departments. SCOPE is the self-financed extension arm of CityU. It echoes the University's vision and mission, with SCOPE aspiring to be a leading school in professional and life-long education.

The core educational provision of the University constitutes full degree programmes, at undergraduate (Ug) and postgraduate (Pg) levels, both taught and research. CityU also offers a small number of sub-degree programmes, mainly via SCOPE. In the 2022/23 academic year, there were 2 914 RPg students, 235 on seven professional doctorates, 5 908 students registered on 61 taught postgraduate (TPg) programmes, 12 055 students enrolled across 55 Bachelor's programmes, 105 students registered on four Associate Degree programmes, and 1 133 students across various continuing education programmes offered by SCOPE. Of the 882 academic staff recorded for CityU proper in the 2022/23 academic year, around 70% are non-local staff from outside Hong Kong. There are also 96 staff members at SCOPE.

1. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC QUALITY

- 1.1 CityU has a clearly articulated mission, vision and Strategic Plan and that seeks to differentiate its purpose through professional education and knowledge transfer. The CityU Strategic Plan has five themes: education and student development; research and knowledge transfer; faculty and staff advancement; campus growth and sustainability; and, global identity and global advancement. The Strategic Plan is focused on preparing students for work and life in the 21st century, developing student talent and creating 'applicable knowledge for social and economic advancement'. It is implemented through an outcomes-based approach to ensure students are ready for employment. The approach has resulted in an increasing number of partnerships to provide students with industry experience and global exchange programmes for students to study overseas, which is well appreciated by students. The significant range of professionally accredited programmes, corroborates CityU's claim to emphasise the acquisition of applied knowledge.
- 1.2 The Strategic Plan's themes are reflected in the Learning and Teaching Strategy which has the five core elements of: a learning-centric approach; technology-integrated learning, with a focus on digital literacy across the student population; authentic learning, a problem-based approach that cultivates a dynamic learning environment mirroring well real world solutions; a 'broaden horizons' programme which aims to foster collaboration among academic staff; and recognising excellence, which bestows awards to exceptional academic staff. While the Learning and Teaching Strategy document was only approved in 2023,

there is evidence that the University has already implemented various academic initiatives in support of the five core elements. The main focus has been on developing the online environment and learning and this is now being led by the Associate Provost (Digital Learning), with the support of the Digital Learning Task Force set up to implement digital learning and help programmes in the shift.

- 1.3 The University's approach to the management of academic standards and quality locates Senate, chaired by the President, as the focal point of academic authority including with respect to all academic regulations and processes. Operational management and accountability is delegated to Colleges/Schools under the direct oversight of a series of Senate committees and sub-committees, including Academic Policy Committee (APC), Quality Assurance Committee of CityU (CityU-QAC), the Board of Graduate Studies (BGS) and the Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUS), all of which have clear and comprehensive terms of reference. The Audit Panel noted that there is careful scrutiny of lower-level documents by Senate to ensure that key matters are considered, and policies are appropriately implemented. There is a regular review of the effectiveness of the committee infrastructure and key strategies to ensure they are relevant and effective. For example, most recently BUS has instigated a review of the award classification method which has altered from honours classification to a Grade Point Average grading system.
- 1.4 The governing body of SCOPE is the Board, chaired by the Provost. The Board oversees strategic, academic and financial matters, reporting to the Senate on academic issues via the APC and CityU-QAC. SCOPE has representation at the Senate and CityU-QAC.
- 1.5 College/School Deans have oversight of delivery and assurance of programmes, in line with University policies. They are also responsible for annual and periodic review of programmes, departmental learning and teaching plans, and implementing actions to ensure continuous enhancement of T&L. To ensure a degree of consistency in committee formation and function, the University has a framework setting out the minimum requirements for the terms of reference and constitution of some College/School sub-committees and departmental committees. College/School Boards oversee the work of departmental committee structures responsible for the delivery, operation and T&L environment of programmes. The University routinely monitors and reviews the structure of delegated authority and, over time, this has led to the restructuring and new creation of AUs and SCOPE sections.
- 1.6 Performance is monitored through reporting to, and feedback from the UGC, student feedback and outcomes, and external benchmarking. The University has established KPIs, including for teaching, learning, research, and service to measure the effectiveness of its operations and ensure that it is achieving its goals. Programme monitoring demonstrates careful consideration of feedback from both internal and external stakeholders, including external advisors. The Senior

Management Team routinely evaluates collected data against the University's KPIs, which encompass inputs from teaching, research, and service units, allowing for the identification of both strengths and weaknesses and guiding subsequent actions. SCOPE is also subject to annual review by the University.

- 1.7 Further monitoring is enabled by each programme producing an Annual Programme Report (APRe) utilising a common template which requires data on admissions, student performance and success, award classifications, first destination of graduates, student award winners and student support, as well as student and other stakeholder feedback, and information on global engagement, innovation and good practice. Reports are reviewed locally and approved by the College/School Board with a summary report including progress against action plans then submitted to CityU-QAC for approval. Additionally, programmes are subject to external scrutiny through periodic reviews conducted with the involvement of Departmental Academic Advisors (DAA), External Academic Advisors (EAA) and Review of Academic Excellence (RoE) Panels. Further details on programme monitoring and review are included in Criterion 2 of this report.
- 1.8 CityU's academic quality framework, based on the five organising principles of approach, implementation, review, enhancement and externality, is articulated in the comprehensive Quality Manual which applies to all taught programmes. It covers the University's approach to programme delivery, mechanisms for monitoring the quality T&L, roles and responsibilities of the University's stakeholders, and continuous improvement through sharing of good practice. The Guidebook for Research Degree Studies provides RPg students with wide-ranging academic, regulatory and administrative information as well as details of the six performance indicators against which RPg programme performance is evaluated. SCOPE's Quality Assurance Framework and Quality Handbook are similarly detailed, comprehensive and focused. The Audit Panel was able to confirm that the University has an effective framework for quality assurance and enhancement enabling it to maintain effective oversight of academic standards and quality.
- 1.9 The University's Academic Regulations set out the standard of requirements that must be met to obtain the award for which a student is registered. Academic standards are set within programmes of study with learning outcomes related to graduate attributes. Maintenance of academic standards is gauged by assessing data on actual levels of achievement by students against the set standards.
- 1.10 CityU compares its performance against achievements and standards of other global universities and industry benchmarks to identify best practice and areas for improvement. The DAA Scheme, introduced across all AUs in 2019, employs external academics selected for their seniority, experience, international perspective and understanding of Hong Kong's higher education, to benchmark and monitor academic programmes. Similarly, Departmental Advisory

Committees (DAC) enable AUs and SCOPE to receive feedback and advice from industry experts, alumni, and other stakeholders for new programme development and commentary on existing programmes, teaching and research. The large number of professionally accredited programmes, with significant involvement of industry partners, serves as another benchmarking mechanism which helps evaluate programme quality and relevance, ensuring that they meet industry standards and expectations. The RoE, a review of academic provision within a single AU by an independent panel comprising senior academics from leading or benchmark universities, provides further benchmarking and external engagement, integrating with internal periodic review mechanisms. Graduate feedback demonstrates that CityU's industry partnerships add value to student employability. The Audit Panel concluded that the University has an effective approach to benchmarking of its academic programmes.

- 1.11 The University's arrangements for Ug and Pg admissions are overseen by the Admissions Office (ADMO) and SGS respectively, with non-local recruitment undertaken by the Global Engagement Office (GEO). Applicants must satisfy the general entrance requirements specified by Senate, and where appropriate, higher standards or equivalent acceptable qualifications set out by individual programmes. All minimum requirements for prospective students are publicly available on the CityU website. Admission for SCOPE programmes is undertaken by the School itself. The Admissions Committee oversees admission-related matters, for example working with AU Admission Tutors to facilitate Ug admissions. The ADMO and SGS submit annual Admissions Reports for Ug and TPg programmes, respectively, to Senate and these are used by senior management and AU Heads to review admissions strategies. Recent review has seen CityU seeking to recruit more high-quality TPg students by setting the target percentage of students from reputable universities, CityU also raised the entrance scores. The Admissions Handbook for prospective RPg students lists criteria for candidate selection. Students confirmed that they receive clear advice about admission from University staff and through the CityU website. The Audit Panel was able to confirm that there is a well-defined, comprehensive and evaluative approach to student admissions.
- 1.12 The Audit Panel established that the University has a robust and evaluative framework for academic governance. Operations are well aligned to the mission, vision and strategic objectives of CityU, with its mission to nurture students in applied knowledge and social development set out in its strategy, well documented in policy and processes, and evident in outcomes. There is an appropriate, multi-layered, academic governance structure with Senate exercising ultimate responsibility for the oversight and maintenance of academic quality and standards, and effective delegation to AUs. Quality Assurance frameworks are set out in the comprehensive Quality Manual and Handbook. Academic standards are set and maintained with the help of a range of benchmarking mechanisms.

2. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL, MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 2.1 CityU's approach to its responsibilities for advancing the professional education of students is based on its mission 'to nurture and develop students' talents and to create applicable knowledge for social and economic advancement.' As a point of differentiation in its provision of professional education, CityU aspires to make the integration of disciplines a distinctive feature. As its Strategic Plan stipulates, 'the mutual enrichment of disciplines in education is vital to achieving the University's mission to nurture future generations of professional leaders.' Both the Strategic Plan and the Learning and Teaching Strategy provide significant reference points for understanding CityU's approach to programme development, approval, monitoring and review (see paragraphs 1.1-1.2).
- 2.2 The University has developed a framework for programme development and review which provides for a consistency in design and implementation across three main themes: alignment of learning outcomes with graduate outcomes; involvement of external stakeholders, both academic and industry leaders; and benchmarking regionally, nationally and professionally.
- 2.3 The University's two-stage process for new programme development follows these principles. At Stage One, the University, at multiple levels, considers a conceptual proposal which identifies a gap or opportunity for a new programme. This stage also embraces any relevant prospective relationship with professional bodies and support from potential industry partners and is judged against a range of criteria such as community need, strategic alignment, student demand and financial viability. The second stage of the process sees the development of a detailed curriculum plan that embraces the comments and observations made during the initial stage of development. In the case of SCOPE, the framework adopts similar principles – strategic alignment, student demand, resourcing – in a modified form. New programme initiatives routinely seek to embrace multiple disciplinary perspectives in new or emerging fields of study, while the criteria for closure/suspension can include market failure (lack of student demand), shifting priorities in academic resourcing, and financial viability. Notable within CityU's existing portfolio is the significant number of multidisciplinary programmes in single or dual degree format, the integration of Bachelor and Masters level programmes, and a growth in the number of TPg level programmes being developed and introduced. This aligns closely with the University's strategic educational priorities.
- 2.4 In its consideration of the effectiveness of CityU's programme development process, the Audit Panel explored the new Bachelor of Engineering in Microelectronics Engineering as an illustrative case study. This demonstrated the iterative process of the new programme from its earliest Stage One conceptual documentation through subsequent phases involving DAC, supporting

documentation from prospective industry partners, the Programme Validation Panel process itself, staff/student consultation and benchmarking against the academic profiles of relevant local competitor and universities in the Mainland. It was followed by the full Stage Two proposal which includes a detailed curriculum plan to ensure that comments from the approval committees on the Stage One proposal are responded to, comments from the Programme Validation Panel are taken into consideration, and that the curriculum of the programme is aligned with the University's mission, Strategic Plan and expected graduate outcomes. The Panel noted the depth and rigour of the proposal at both Stages and its attentive consideration at each level of the University's governance structure from the College's Board and Executive Committee, BUS, APC and Senate. These committees each added some distinct reflections on the Stage One documentation – size of the sector the programme might serve, employer market for graduates in Hong Kong and the Mainland, multidisciplinary design features and other departmental inputs. Of particular note were the comments provided by industry stakeholders and graduates who identified the areas of particular demand, such as in new chip development and integrated circuit design, as an aid to the University as it moved into Stage Two of the programme development process.

- 2.5 The Audit Panel considered that the programme development and approval process is robust, multifactored and comprehensive, having supported 44 new programme initiatives since the 2018/19 academic year and resulted in 14 programme suspensions and/or closures. Where programmes are considered for discontinuation or suspension, as evidenced by documentation of the Master of Science in Financial Services as an example, consultations with relevant stakeholders – alumni, Programme Committee and DAC – are carefully considered. Based on the volume of new programme development work, the engagement and depth with which a wide range of stakeholders are engaged in the process, and the involvement of key committees, the Panel concluded that the approach to new programme delivery is serving the University well.
- 2.6 There is a well-articulated annual review of programmes undertaken through APRe, whereby AUs submit reports on programmes at all levels, covering programme design, academic rigour and programme viability. Comprehensive reports include consideration of admission statistics, student performance and success data, first destinations of graduates, student support data, feedback from internal and external stakeholders including students, input from EAAs and DAAs, learning resources, global engagement, programme design and viability, and good practice. An action plan lists matters to be addressed in the next twelve months. All levels of reports evaluate the extent to which programmes have been successful in achieving their published aims and serve as the basis for action planning at the programme level. Reports are considered at College/School level and this results in the compilation of summary reports which go to either BUS or BGS, before being discussed at CityU-QAC. APRes for SCOPE programmes are considered by the Sub-committee on Programme Monitoring and Review,

the Committee on Academic Affairs and the SCOPE Board. SCOPE then submits an Annual Quality Assurance Report covering its APRes to CityU-QAC. TPg programmes are subject to mandatory review after their first two years with a focus on academic viability and academic standards. Report outcomes and associated good practice are communicated to students through focus group meetings and other arenas for consultation. Good practice from programmes is also disseminated on the CityU-QAC website.

- 2.7 The Audit Panel was able to sample a range of APRes from different Colleges and Schools, at both Ug and TPg levels, and follow their progress through the committee structure. At College and School level, APRes provide a disciplined and focused opportunity for programme leaders to assess, at a broader level, the extent to which programmes are continuing to meet their objectives and provide the quality of education the University aspires to deliver. The reports are primarily, and increasingly, driven by centrally collected data which reliably informs performance judgements. With the University expecting that the process of standardising data may take up to two years, it follows that, as the data accumulates over time, the longitudinal value of the data will grow and enhance the ability for decision-making about programme reform, revision and renewal. In their aggregated form to central academic governance committees, and particularly as reflected in the deliberations of CityU-QAC, programmes are highlighted on a 'by exception' basis both for good practice and for improvement priorities, the Associate Provost (Quality Assurance and Accountability)'s evaluation of TLQ results each semester providing an example (see paragraph 2.8). Managing the volume of material generated through programme reviews constitutes a major challenge, though the Audit Panel noted that it is competently structured by Colleges, Schools and SCOPE and well managed by the central committees that share responsibilities for considering, and responding, to the reports.
- 2.8 APRes are informed by data collections from University-wide survey instruments and a range of other data collected centrally. The surveys include TLQ completed by students at the end of each course, SLES, GES and the Alumni Tracer Study. The use of non-standardised feedback and qualitative information on programme performance at AU level is less structured but similarly valuable, drawing on input from various external stakeholders including professional bodies, external advisors, international benchmark partners, graduate employers and industry partners. The Audit Trails followed by the Audit Panel provided strong examples of how qualitative and quantitative data is used in programme monitoring including by benchmarking against comparator institutions. However, while benchmarking is widely practised across all AUs, the extent to which the University has developed a standardised set of data collection tools is yet to be realised. The Panel recognises the initiative newly underway to build a central collection point of relevant data for incorporation into institutional reporting.

- 2.9 Reflecting the high priority given to OBTL, external reviews on this priority programme objective have been undertaken in 2017, 2020 and 2023. It is evident that recommendations from these reviews have stimulated considerable debate within the University about programme objectives and the appropriate mix of assessment types that align with these objectives. The introduction of a formal reporting template facilitates a focus on how graduate outcomes are supported and achieved. Statistics on the alignment of OBTL, across more than 200 syllabi, have been consistent over time. The balance and weighting of continuous assessment elements with final course examinations is the focus of the regular, rigorous consideration. While there is some variation in this area, it is considered to be appropriate given differences in practice across disciplines and programmes.
- 2.10 Professional accreditation of programmes is a strategic priority. But alongside the curricular requirements which accreditation brings, CityU's programmes provide proactive opportunities for students to personalise their own learning. This is achieved through enabling choice on elective courses (sometimes in quite different disciplines and to the level of a double major or a minor), project work, research projects, internship, workplace learning opportunities and international exchanges. As an example, the Bachelor of Business Administration (Global Business) lists 31 domestic and three international internship partners which students were able to access in a single academic year. The Audit Panel observed that the University has achieved an optimal balance between meeting professional accreditation requirements (where necessary) and maximising the flexibility for student choice as they personalise and prioritise the range of their other interests to enrich their learning and educational experience. Moreover, this aligns with CityU's aspiration to educate students beyond formal assessment to focus on other forms of learning and development facilitated by community service. The Audit Panel considers that **the flexibility created for students to personalise their learning through choices of elective courses, practicum, workplace and/or internship studies and options for international exchanges with overseas benchmark partners and other collaborating institutions is a feature of good practice.**
- 2.11 For CityU, as for other universities globally, the development of online learning as a critical component of programme design and delivery had its origins in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the University has made significant strides in developing systems for online programme delivery, technology-mediated innovation in curriculum design currently seems an under-utilised tool rather than being the primary method of teaching delivery across programmes. As previously identified, while CityU's Strategic Plan identifies 'a contemporary technology-enriched curriculum' as one of the four educational objectives in the current five-year period, in the post-COVID era, the University is yet to fully exploit its capacity in this area. As noted in Criterion 1 (paragraph 1.2), the Panel was made aware of a Digital Learning Task Force set up to implement digital learning and to help programmes in the shift. However, the Panel formed the

view that there could be benefit to the University developing a stronger strategy to support the use of technology in and for curriculum development.

- 2.12 From its discussions with senior and academic staff and consideration of documentation, the Audit Panel was able to establish that CityU has a rigorous approach to programme development, approval, monitoring and review. Processes lead to substantive programme improvement with enhancement priorities informed by strong data collection and effective consultations with stakeholders including students, industry partners, internship participants, international benchmarking partners and external advisors. The Audit Panel recognises that a distinctive feature of CityU's approach to this criterion is the flexibility it brings to programme design such that students are provided with considerable scope to complement their interests in a professionally-accredited education with personalised opportunities to pursue elective options across various disciplines, in research project work, in workplace learning and internships and through international exchange arrangements. The Panel formed the view that the number of students who avail themselves of these opportunities is impressive.

3. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 3.1 The University has an explicitly described mission to nurture students in applied knowledge and social development. This commitment is evident through its extensive range of professionally accredited programmes, affirming the institution's emphasis on academic excellence in applied fields. The University offers an impressive array of professional programmes. All students in the University, however, have the opportunity to receive a well-rounded education. Additionally, the substantial number of proposed double-major/double-degree programmes further underscore the University's dedication to offering students a diverse and comprehensive educational experience.
- 3.2 The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy is based on the five core elements of: a learning-centric approach; technology-integrated learning; authentic learning; broadening horizons; and recognising excellence. Its academic policies and operational procedures are well-aligned with this Strategy. To support these core elements, the University has developed several strategies aimed at improving teaching quality and enhancing student learning experiences. Despite the formalisation of the Strategy document in 2023, the Audit Panel found evidence that the University has been implementing academic initiatives in line with these elements for some time. For example, the Global Work Attachment Programme existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the CityU Tiger programme can be traced back to 2020.
- 3.3 The University places a high value on personalised learning, providing flexible study options that cater to students' individual interests and career goals. The University's curriculum framework supports this approach by providing students

with a wide range of learning opportunities, including internships, international exchanges, and project-based learning. The Audit Panel noted the role of systematic design and development of flexible curricular and co-curricular initiatives in contributing to the feature of good practice identified in Criterion 2 (paragraph 2.10).

- 3.4 The Panel noted the University's commitment to supporting and training its teaching staff. AUs and notably the Talent and Education Development Office (TED) offer support and training on effective teaching methods for both staff and students. New staff members are required to attend teacher induction and development sessions, and existing staff are incentivised to participate in teaching development events through financial support, encouraging continuous professional growth and improvement in teaching practices. The University also maintains a Teaching Excellence Awards scheme to recognise outstanding teaching. Teaching Development Grant and Teaching Start-up Grant are available up to HK\$270,000 with over fifty grants being awarded over the previous two years, 12 of which were awarded to academic staff who had joined the University for less than two years. A structured mentoring system has been established to provide junior teachers with valuable teaching advice and guidance whereby new staff members are paired with a minimum of two academic mentors who offer ongoing support and assistance. Additionally, programmes are available to provide support to help new academic staff improve teaching skills and develop the necessary resources to begin successful academic careers. The Audit Panel considers that **the mentorship programme and the Teaching Start-up Grant together demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting the development of recently appointed staff, and constitute a feature of good practice.**
- 3.5 The University has implemented a comprehensive system to assess students' learning and development at various stages of their programme experience. It includes TLQ administered at the end of each course, SLES to measure longitudinal learning progress, and GES and Alumni Tracer Study to evaluate long-term employability (for further details, see paragraph 2.8). The Audit Panel noted the comprehensive range of surveys targeting graduates and alumni to provide an evaluation of students' learning trajectories and the overall education experience at programme level over time.
- 3.6 The Deans of Colleges/Schools hold primary responsibility for maintaining standards and effectiveness of T&L in the programmes offered by their AUs. TLQ serves as a primary means for Deans and Heads of AUs to identify programmes, courses and teachers that may need additional support. Currently, TLQ results are analysed by the Office of the Provost and Deputy President but purely to identify underperforming teachers, informing subsequent remedial actions. Teachers with low scores result in the Associate Provost (Quality Assurance and Accountability) writing to the Deans, requesting them to provide an action plan until matters are resolved. While this valuable programme-level

analysis is undertaken, the Audit Panel found no evidence of an integrated, rigorous analysis of T&L emerging from the outcomes of the various surveys including TLQ, SLES and institutional benchmarking. Similarly, Senate, CityU-QAC and APC minutes reveal no overall consideration of outcomes and suggest that the key committees could do more to understand emerging institutional patterns. The Audit Panel therefore concluded that the University could benefit from a more comprehensive and thematic analysis of T&L-related data being derived from across the entire institution to identify both generic areas for improvement but also T&L practice worthy of wider dissemination. Accordingly, the Audit Panel **recommends the University to consider the proactive synthesis and comprehensive usage of its T&L data at institutional level to help identify thematic issues for a formative quality enhancement process.**

- 3.7 The extension branch of the University, SCOPE, operates with its own units and committees dedicated to programme development, quality assurance, and student development. The Audit Panel found that the policies and monitoring procedures for evaluating T&L at SCOPE are aligned with those of the University. Support for e-learning is made available.
- 3.8 The University is proactively evaluating the means and impacts of using GenAI in student learning. The GenAI initiative is currently overseen by the Associate Provost (Digital Learning), with support from the Digital Learning Team. In 2023 the University formed a Working Group on the Use of GenAI Tools in Learning and Teaching. The implementation of GenAI is supported by the comprehensive Guidelines on the Use of GenAI Tools in Learning and Teaching which provide staff and students with explicit guidelines regarding its utilisation. The Audit Panel found that students and staff have a consistent understanding of the policy and codes regarding the use of GenAI in programmes and research theses.
- 3.9 Over the past four years, rapid changes in T&L arrangements have been necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting the University to transit to a hybrid learning mode. The University has devised Guidelines on Preparation for Online Learning and organised training workshops and videos for teachers. There has been active consideration of the integration of digital learning into CityU's overarching Learning and Teaching Strategy. The establishment of a Digital Learning Task Force, along with the proposal for team-based learning classrooms, further highlights the University's commitment to ongoing innovation in education. The Audit Panel noted efforts to engage staff in further training on e-learning to ensure teachers are equipped with the necessary expertise and knowledge to fully harness the potential of technology in informing programme development and enhancing student learning.
- 3.10 RPg students have the opportunity to serve as Teaching Assistants, offering valuable training for those aspiring to pursue an academic career. They are required to take two courses dedicated to teaching and English enhancement. The

standard completion time for full-time Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students is set at two years and four years, respectively. The majority of RPg students successfully complete their studies within the designated period. Many programmes actively encourage students to publish their research before graduation with some AUs organising workshops for RPg students on publication and collaboration with other researchers. The introduction of the qualifying examination for doctoral candidates a few years ago serves as an effective means to assess students' potential to complete their thesis at an early stage, thus facilitating students' timely progress towards graduation. Research students were appreciative of the quality of research supervision, the research environment and general support, as well as the available international learning opportunities. On the basis of meetings with students and consideration of documentation, the Audit Panel found that the overall arrangements and requirements for RPg students are fit for purpose.

- 3.11 The University invests considerable time and effort to ensure staff appointments, promotions, and reappointments maintain high standards. Academic staff regularly receive updates on tenure and promotion criteria through various channels for clarity and transparency. External engagement of academic staff is individually driven and integrated into the staff appraisal process, valuing both national and international opportunities for professional growth.
- 3.12 A dedicated survey is conducted to gather feedback on various campus services, including the library, health centre, bookstore and banking services, ensuring that the University addresses the specific needs and concerns of its community members. The shortage of laboratory space has been an issue over time. However, during the Audit, students expressed overall satisfaction with the current facilities. Despite the modest size of the e-learning support team, additional resources and assistance have been allocated to meet the growing demands and requirements in this area, and students and staff were pleased with the provision of the e-learning facilities and support.
- 3.13 The University community takes pride in the recognition of CityU's international outlook. The majority of current non-local students come from the Mainland. The Audit Panel recognised the University's strong and genuine commitment to further diversifying the student profile and internationalising student learning experiences, based on the steady increase in international staff and students, and the increase in international exchange programmes, as well as support for non-local students, exchange programmes and overseas activities.
- 3.14 The Audit Panel noted the University's thorough and systematic approach to evaluating and improving the quality of T&L across its programmes, including those offered through SCOPE. CityU's commitment to providing a well-rounded yet personalised education for its students, coupled with its focus on fostering applied knowledge, is evident through its emphases on curriculum flexibility, diverse learning opportunities, and the offering of a range of professionally

accredited programmes. Conducting a more comprehensive, thematic analysis of survey data from various sources would also contribute to further improving the quality and effectiveness of T&L. Additionally, the Panel recognises the University's commitments in supporting RPg programmes and young faculty members, maintaining high standards for staff appointments and promotions, and further enhancing student diversity and overseas learning experiences.

4. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 CityU has a well-developed and transparent University Assessment Policy for its taught programmes with devolved responsibility for implementation vested at the AU level in Colleges, Schools and SCOPE. In the case of SCOPE, the supplementary Assessment Policy and Principles for Continuing Education Programmes provides for the particular context of SCOPE's academic programmes and delivery and articulates the full extent of assessment options that may be deployed across its programme range. These policies articulate a criterion-referenced and outcomes-based assessment approach with assessment clearly linked to learning outcomes. Other University documents align with the broad policy framework on assessment including the Admissions Handbooks for Ug, TPg and RPg students which all provide advice to students about the CityU approach to assessment. The Audit Panel was able to affirm that the combined policies provide a clear framework of accountability and set standard expectations for key aspects of assessment.
- 4.2 Assessment tasks are designed to evaluate student performance and demonstrate the fitness of the courses in achieving their intended learning outcomes, and ultimately the programme intended learning outcomes and the graduate outcomes. Course learning outcomes combine a set of interconnected T&L activities and assessment tasks which are set out in online course syllabi and assessed using assessment rubrics to support consistency of marking. The Audit Panel noted the rigour with which assessment is effectively embedded in processes for course and programme design and delivery.
- 4.3 AUs are expected to regularly review courses to ensure their continuing currency is in line with procedures in the CityU Quality Manual and SCOPE Quality Handbook. Major changes, such as change of title or assessment tasks are considered at College/School Boards and the BUS/BGS.
- 4.4 It is a requirement that assessment criteria and grade descriptors are communicated to students at the beginning of each programme and course, but they are also articulated at student orientation, included in student handbooks and posted on the CityU website. In the case of SCOPE this is within two weeks of the commencement of a study module. Students are also provided with generic grading criteria for CityU and SCOPE courses in the Academic Regulations. A dedicated learning management platform for online learning provides students

with the assessment arrangements for their various courses. Students from Colleges, Schools and SCOPE confirmed that they are provided with transparent information about assessment both at orientation and, routinely, at the commencement of each programme and course.

- 4.5 The University's Rules on Academic Honesty regulate student academic honesty matters and the adjudication of student academic dishonesty cases. New students are required to complete an online tutorial and quiz and fill out a declaration on their understanding of academic honesty. Student handbooks and material on the CityU website reinforce academic staff messages to students about academic integrity and misconduct. The University uses a web-based plagiarism detection system to compare student submissions with a wide corpus of source texts. User guides for students and teachers are available on Digital Learning website.
- 4.6 CityU's and SCOPE's Assessment Policies stipulate that written or oral feedback, either on individual or collective basis, must normally be provided within 20 working days to students after the assessment task submission. Ug students confirmed that the prescribed maximum timeframe for assessment feedback is routinely met, and often well inside that requirement, and that feedback on assessment helps students to understand the grade awarded, identify strengths and weaknesses and improve future performance. In the case of RPg students, the combination of the Admissions Handbook for Research Degree Programmes, weekly meetings with supervisors and annual progress reports provide certainty around assessment procedures.
- 4.7 The Academic Regulations include detailed procedures on formal and informal review of assessment decisions relating to course grades and/or academic standing and awards, the valid grounds for review, and relevant timelines. Assessment review levels have been stable and low in number over time with the exception of the introduction of online assessments in the 2021/22 academic year during the COVID-19 pandemic. Appeal data is reviewed annually by CityU-QAC.
- 4.8 CityU's assessment policies for RPg students are distinct and appropriately tailored to the needs and circumstances of the diversity of research environments that the University offers. The Guidebook for Research Degree Studies provides a detailed and comprehensive articulation of the framework for PhD and MPhil study. This includes obligations associated with the specified standards for coursework. The methodology and associated requirements for the assessment of a thesis is codified in explicit terms. The panel noted the effective use of a qualifying examination, and the consistently high pass rates over the past four years, as an appropriate 'filtering' mechanism for research student candidacy. The Code of Practice for Research Degree Supervision provides clarity around the expectations and obligations of supervisors in assessment-related matters. RPg students met by the Panel were positive about orientation processes, including where this was partly conducted online. Students were appreciative of

the quality of supervision as well as the support and engagement of their supervisors in helping them integrate with their College or School and in explaining how they were to be assessed in the coursework components of their programme and the way theses and oral examinations would be conducted and assessed.

- 4.9 CityU employs extensive external benchmarking in assessment design and procedures, both of which are regularly reviewed with the help of DAAs and/or EAAs, as well as relevant professional body(ies) where a programme leads to professional accreditation. As noted in Criterion 2, the University has also demonstrated its commitment to international benchmarking in its reviews of institutional OBTL methodology in 2017, 2020 and 2023, both of which made productive use of benchmark universities and revealed robust and comprehensive consideration of course and programme assessment methodology across a large sample of syllabi. The reviews have been seriously considered at CityU-QAC and other forums, particularly with Deans. One significant criticism of assessment practice has been an over-dependence on heavily weighted final, formal course examinations and the extent to which other forms of assessment could be successfully deployed as an alternative. The Audit Panel heard that while some programmes continue to weight final examinations quite heavily, this is often because of concerns that other assessment types may be vulnerable to the inappropriate use of GenAI. In this context, programme leaders have flexibility to choose assessment models that are deemed best ‘fit for purpose’. The Panel considered that these debates showed a rigorous and evaluative reflection on assessment policy and processes.
- 4.10 Online assessment mechanisms were one form of innovation, introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a matter of necessity. Comprehensive guidelines for both students and staff were provided in advance of this initiative and the Panel considered them to be transparent and comprehensive. While this context for assessment did generate a temporary increase in reviews of assessment outcomes, this was not a significant number and the appeals process dealt with them successfully (see paragraph 4.7).
- 4.11 The Audit Panel concluded that the University’s governance, policy framework, implementation practices and its mechanisms for review and self-reflection of assessment are well developed, mature and dynamic in their deployment. The flexibility this framework delivers to AUs and programme leaders and the transparency it provides for all students is valuable. Assessment documentation is clear and transparent, as are the practices deployed by the University to inform students of assessment expectations through their programme orientation and at the start of each individual course. A similar transparency exists with respect to the induction and deployment of assessment policies as they impact RPg students. The Audit Panel notes the relatively recent initiatives of CityU to update and protect academic integrity across the institution. This is reflected in revisions to the Rules on Academic Honesty and the development of Guidelines on the Use

of GenAI Tools in Learning and Teaching for both staff and students. The Panel was able to form the view that assessment standards, policy and processes are effectively evaluated and fit for purpose.

5. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS

- 5.1 CityU's approach to student support is based on four core principles which apply across all levels of study and from induction to graduation. The University: is committed to providing a learning experience that adds significant value to students' lives regardless of background or capability; believes that every student deserves the support, resources, and opportunities to succeed academically and personally; aims to create an environment that enables all students to achieve their full potential and pursue their goals with confidence; and, aims to supplement and strengthen students' graduates attributes and develop their identity and self-confidence to contribute to their communities. Together these aim to provide students with a quality learning experience for their academic, personal and professional development, as well as an inclusive learning environment to pursue their career and goals.
- 5.2 All policies, guidelines, schemes for orientation, progression monitoring, counselling, internship, global study and employment are developed based on the four core principles. To deliver this, the University has developed a well-defined infrastructure and set of mechanisms for student support. An Associate Provost (Student Life) is responsible for oversight of student services and support, and reports to the Provost. The Associate Provost works with the Dean of Students Office, GEO, Student Development Services (SDS) and TED. Offices have different channels to collect student feedback so as to understand students' needs as well as evaluate the effectiveness of different schemes and activities.
- 5.3 CityU offers a range of orientation programmes at university-level to all students, including the University Welcoming Ceremony for Ug students, the University Life Induction Day, and specific orientation for non-local Ug, exchange, TPg and RPg students. Different AUs provide tailored orientation activities and programmes for their major students and these introduce the AU, the programme leader and key academic staff, the study programme, and graduates' career paths. Students appreciate the orientation they receive and the website for university-wide student orientation-related information. While RPg students can join the induction programmes organised by the University and their specific AU, SGS supplements this with orientation for RPg students where they receive important information about their research programme, supervision and all aspects of their study experience, as well as meeting their supervisors and other research staff. SCOPE also arranges bespoke orientation for its students. SDS and SGS have their own websites and provide students with informative student handbooks. GEO provides support and orientation for non-local and exchange students to

facilitate visa application to Hong Kong as well as support in settling into the University. From consideration of orientation materials and student views, the Audit Panel was able to confirm that CityU offers high-quality induction programmes which support students in integrating to the University.

- 5.4 CityU actively collects students' feedback to monitor student progression. To collect timely feedback from freshmen, the University has launched a new initiative, 'Chatting with DoS', which involves the DoS meeting first year students for an informal discussion on their first semester to help understand their learning progress and any issues, comments on their courses and programmes, and their psychosocial well-being and relevant needs. The DoS then prepares a comprehensive and useful report for the College/School Dean's consideration and appropriate actions including with respect to refining academic and non-academic student support.
- 5.5 CityU's Academic Advising Scheme for Ug students sits alongside peer support mechanisms to help students settle in and plan for their studies. Each student is assigned an academic advisor and a student mentor and the requirement is that, in the context of DegreeWorks, a web-based academic advising tool which facilitates advice on curricular issues and personal development, 'students must meet their academic advisors at least once each semester during the first two years'. Advisors can then connect students to counselling services when deemed necessary. While the University notes that the Scheme has been evaluated as effective in a report to the CityU-QAC, the Audit Panel found that AUs implement the Scheme in different ways and sometimes beyond the confines of formal policy despite pockets of good practice. For example, expectations about the regularity of meetings are not consistently met and the CityU-QAC report had found that DegreeWorks was not being used by many advisors. The Panel noted the move towards some AUs introducing a zero-credit course for academic advising to promote consistency and adherence to policy but the University acknowledged that in various cases, formal expectations are not being met and, in response, the Associate Provost (Student Life) had met with all College and School Associate Deans to discuss making the revised Academic Advising Scheme compulsory. In this context, the Audit Panel **recommends that the University's Academic Advising Scheme is comprehensively and consistently implemented across all AUs to ensure that academic advisors meet their academic advisees in line with institutional policy.**
- 5.6 Partly on the basis of information gathered from Ug students, SDS has developed and offers a wide range of support services for students' personal, professional and academic development. Academic skills development is available through the Peer-Assisted Learning Scheme using Supplemental Instruction, a course that aims to enhance students' understanding of course materials and improve their overall learning and reasoning skills. The Chan Feng Men-ling Chan Shuk-lin Language Centre offers language enhancement and support. The Career and Leadership Centre provides soft skills for career development through

Employment Enhancement Programmes and administers the Campus Internship Scheme to promote employability. Approximately half of all CityU graduates from Ug programmes have taken part in internships. There are various initiatives to promote employability and entrepreneurship, helping the University to meet its strategic goals. The Audit Panel noted that all these initiatives may well contribute to the student employment rate increasing from 84.6% in 2019 to 97% in 2022.

- 5.7 As part of its aim to provide developmental programmes and funding support for students to attain personal and professional excellence, and pursue life-long learning, SDS, in recent years, has also focused on students' mental well-being. In this context, SDS alongside providing Mental Health First Aid training, has proactively invited 'at-risk' students to receive advice from counsellors as an intervention measure following which they can subsidise visits to see other professionals. The University reports that these and other initiatives were particularly important during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and have received positive evaluation from students. The Audit Panel considers **the effectiveness of the initiative of proactively inviting 'at risk' students with special educational needs (SEN) to seek support from the University's counselling service to be a feature of good practice.**
- 5.8 The CityU Tiger Programme supports students to become future leaders by offering Ug students opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge through research, entrepreneurship and innovation. Students receive personalised guidance to assist them in applying for scholarships and approaching compatible academic staff. 663 students were enrolled on the Programme in the 2022/23 academic year. A longitudinal study comparing the learning experiences of Tiger and non-Tiger students evaluates the effectiveness of the Programme.
- 5.9 CityU provides ample international cross-cultural learning opportunities for students at all levels through partner institutions in over 45 countries. Activities include overseas study, cultural and language study programmes and internships. The Audit Panel noted the University's success in the numbers of outbound exchange students gradually returning closer to pre-pandemic levels, with 805 students in the 2019/20 academic year to 704 in the 2022/23 academic year, and the percentages of CityU graduates with internship experience increasing from 46% in the 2020/21 academic year to 53% in the 2021/22 academic year.
- 5.10 CityU states that student feedback is integral in the University's continuous efforts to enhance teaching quality, support services, and the overall student experience. Students are encouraged to engage in formal and informal dialogue with academic and other staff members, to share their views and concerns. Representatives have formal membership at all levels of academic governance including Senate and its sub-committees, College/School Boards, Staff Student Consultative Committees, and programme committees as well as many other university-wide committees. To achieve a broader representation and attract

more students with an interest in committee participation, the Senate approved a new nomination mechanism for student representatives for some academic- and student-related committees in 2022. Students reported that in practice, selection of student representatives can be more informal with many appointed by specific AUs, and training for the role being equally informal. The Audit Panel would suggest that the University might wish to revisit its approach to appointment and training of student representatives to more thoroughly help prepare them for the role.

- 5.11 CityU is committed to an inclusive learning environment which supports equal opportunity for all. GEO offers a wide range of activities and workshops for around 500 non-local and exchange students so that they can adjust to their new environment smoothly. A dedicated website sets out the various forms of support for SEN students as well as resources for staff. The Audit Panel noted the strong survey results for satisfaction with the University's approach. SDS's Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Awareness Campaign (IDEA Campaign) promotes diversity, inclusiveness and awareness of SEN students, ethnic minorities, LGBT+ and intergeneration harmony on campus.
- 5.12 Overall, from its consideration of documentation and meetings with students and staff, the Audit Panel found clear evidence that CityU offers comprehensive and effective services and support to local, non-local and exchange students at every level. These include the Tiger Programme, assistance for SEN students and the IDEA Campaign to promote an inclusive campus culture. The University is committed to seeking feedback from students via different channels and making use of collected information for improvement. The University also provides international exchange opportunities and an inclusive learning environment for all. CityU's effective approach follows the student journey from induction, progression, personal development, graduation through to employment.

6. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USAGE OF DATA

- 6.1 The CityU Strategic Plan identifies the collection, analysis and use of data as a strategic priority and aims to establish a culture of data-driven decision making practices to deliver measurable outcomes. The University's Data Strategy focuses on four areas – data governance, data infrastructure, data literacy and data collaboration – as well as a clear set of objectives and expected outputs to help deliver its data culture. The Data Strategy is underpinned by the Data Governance Policy which supports common processes for collection, utilisation and security. It aims to: establish principles of effective management and use of institutional data; ensure data is secure and reliable and accessible within a system of controls; ensure decision making, planning and reporting is confirmed by secure well managed data; and articulate responsibilities for the stewardship of institutional data and information systems supporting implementation of the Policy. The Audit Panel noted that these policies provide clear guidance with respect to the collection and management of data.

- 6.2 The Communications and Institutional Research Office (CIRO) is the hub and distribution centre for all institutional data, aiming to provide a single and comprehensive contact point for supplying the University and stakeholders with prompt and accurate data, and analysis to support decision making. The Information Strategy and Governance Committee, chaired by an Associate Vice-President, oversees and approves the University's strategic priorities for information while the Data Governance Committee exercises planning and decision-making authority pertaining to institutional data. The University is planning to open a Statistics Office which will map out strategic developments and their implementation across AUs. Directors and Heads of Department with operational responsibility for the management of University data act as Data Stewards, with duties set out clearly in the Data Strategy and an aim to ensure data is used successfully and securely.
- 6.3 The University uses data in various ways to develop and review strategies. Key institutional surveys (see paragraph 6.8 below) are administered centrally and then the data and consolidated reports are shared with AUs for review and action. Data is collected from students on a standard template, sent to the central unit for analysis, and then back to the AU to work on any issues. Executive Analytics, a Business Intelligence platform launched in 2022 and managed by CIRO, provides centralised analytics on institutional performance data including with respect to education. Heads of AUs and others can access the platform for data/analytics in relation to AUs' KPIs, statistics on student admission, graduate employment and programme completion, and University Accountability Agreement (UAA) sector-wide performance measures. AUs review the statistics provided, including from TLQ and other surveys, to report on their strengths and weaknesses, identify areas for improvement and devise relevant strategies for implementation. The University, with oversight from the Office of the Provost and Deputy President and Senate committees, reviews the same information to evaluate AUs' performance and make resource decisions. The University is aiming for the central management of all data in the medium term.
- 6.4 CityU links the UAA institutional KPIs to the vision and mission, graduate outcomes and strategic focus. Mapping of key data facilitates the development of institution-specific KPIs. The UAA sets out how University KPIs will be set and what drives KPI targets across T&L, research and enhanced internationalisation. Targets set are benchmarked against the performance of comparator universities around the world.
- 6.5 The University uses internal and external benchmark data and external reference points in decision-making with various data enabling international benchmarking with other universities and industry partners. This is used at University level and by individual AUs, for example in shaping TPg admission and RPg partnership selection, as well as in engaging experienced, senior academic staff as DAAs, EAAs and on RoE Panels (see Criterion 1).

- 6.6 The University explained that there is a mix of central and local data used to underpin T&L improvement. Central administrative units including the CIRO are responsible for data collection and analytics which can be utilised in improving T&L. For example, CityU has developed a series of dashboards to help units enhance T&L and the learning environment for students at all levels. These include an Admission Analysis Dashboard, which provides insights into application and admission trends against benchmarks, and the Student Success Dashboard which help AUs to assess students' T&L experiences. The Central Repository on Student Development Activities stores data relating to students' personal development activities and is being developed for students to record achievements and generate their curriculum vitae. To help students and staff utilise data, the University is offering data literacy training programmes, covering topics such as data management, analytics and visualisation. The University also intends to introduce data literacy courses into existing curricula to equip students with the necessary skills to navigate the data-driven environment.
- 6.7 The Audit Panel heard that at local level, AUs may tailor-make surveys to gather additional essential information and data from different stakeholders to enhance their T&L provision. While the University stated that central and local data cover different topics and do not overlap, staff explained that there is a programme of work in hand to centralise all data production and collection to strengthen the validity and reliability of the University's approach.
- 6.8 CityU, as described in Criteria 2 and 3, collects student and graduate survey data for analysis and to inform strategic and practical outcomes. APRes are increasingly driven by centrally collected data which informs performance judgements (see paragraphs 2.7-2.8). The TLQ collects students' qualitative and quantitative feedback on courses, the annual GES is conducted with all graduates of full-time programmes to collect information on employment and further study status, and the CityU Alumni Tracer Study uses alumni feedback to collect graduates' career progression five to six years after their graduation. In each case, the data is received and subject to some form of review by CityU senior management. For example, GES results are presented to senior management, Deans/Heads, and the Advisory Committee for Graduate Employment and the Alumni Tracer Study provides feedback which is used to inform support for future graduates.
- 6.9 The University reports that it is consistently reflecting upon current structures and the need for upgrade where necessary to ensure scalability, performance, and reliability. As an example, CityU has undertaken an additional TLQ programme-level analysis, with reports provided to Heads of AUs. The analysis presents TLQ mean scores by staff, with an overview broken down into Ug and TPg offerings, and helps AUs identify high-performing academic staff and provide assistance to those with lower scores.

- 6.10 The Audit Panel found a developing culture and practice of using data to deliver measurable outcomes, led by the University's Strategic Plan which prioritises the collection, analysis and use of data in its decision-making processes. The Data Strategy has clear objectives and guidance, and is underpinned by the Data Governance Policy, to ensure common practice and data security. The Audit Panel learned that the University uses locally collected and stored data to enhance T&L, but is moving towards a central data base with a view to strengthening collection, analysis and use of data. The University sets and uses KPIs to help meet the institutional vision, mission and strategic focus, for example in measuring achievement of graduate outcomes. There is effective use of various data to establish international benchmarks in development of the academic portfolio and identification of external experts in review processes. The Panel considered that the University is making good progress with its Data Strategy, in a context where it regularly reviews and reflects on the effectiveness of data collection and usage.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Audit Panel established that the University has a robust and evaluative framework for academic governance. Operations are well aligned to the mission, vision and strategic objectives with CityU's mission to nurture students in applied knowledge and social development set out in its Strategic Plan, well documented in policy and processes, and evident in outcomes. There is an appropriate, multi-layered, academic governance structure with Senate exercising ultimate responsibility for the oversight and maintenance of academic quality and standards, and effective delegation to AUs. Quality Assurance frameworks are set out in comprehensive Quality Manual and Handbook. The Audit Panel found a strong data-driven approach to the oversight of student performance, academic standards and the quality of programmes. Academic standards are set and maintained with the help of a range of benchmarking mechanisms against comparator institutions.
- 7.2 The Audit Panel established that CityU has a rigorous approach to programme development, approval, monitoring and review. The University's comprehensive policies and procedures effectively support new programme development and approval, promoting engagement with professional bodies, prospective employers and other industry partners. Similarly, monitoring processes lead to substantive programme improvement with enhancement priorities informed by strong data collection and effective consultations with stakeholders including students, industry partners, internship participants, international benchmarking partners and external advisors. The University pays particular attention to the alignment of curriculum design with OBTL. The Audit Panel identified the flexibility brought to programme design and review such that students are provided with scope to complement their interests in a professionally-accredited education with personalised opportunities to pursue elective options across

various disciplines, in research project work, in workplace learning and internships and through international exchange arrangements.

- 7.3 The Audit Panel was able to confirm that the University's policies and governance procedures relating to T&L are effectively aligned with its Learning and Teaching Strategy. There is a commitment to providing students at all levels with applied knowledge on professionally oriented and accredited programmes coupled with a 'personalised learning' approach, facilitated by a diverse range of curricular options, practice-based learning opportunities, and co-curricular programmes. CityU has a thorough and systematic approach to evaluating and improving the quality of T&L across its programmes, through a range of surveys of T&L, the student experience, and graduate employment. While these could be subject to a more comprehensive, thematic analysis, they nevertheless provide the University with important means of understanding T&L. There have been significant investments in learning technology, led by the Digital Learning Task Force, and the development of innovative T&L approaches, exemplified by the clear policy guidelines on GenAI. The Panel noted that policies and procedures for appointment and induction, development and recognition of staff are effective, identifying in particular the support for newly appointed academic staff.
- 7.4 The Audit Panel concluded that the University governance, policy framework, implementation practices and its mechanisms for review and self-reflection of assessment are well developed, mature and dynamic in their deployment. Assessment documentation is clear and transparent, as are the practices utilised by the University to inform both taught and RPg students of assessment regulations and expectations. There is an effective and evaluative approach to protecting academic integrity and understanding the impact of GenAI. Regular external benchmarking of assessment procedures and outcomes, particularly as they relate to OBTL, have provided confidence that the existing framework is not only robust, but also flexible in its application. The Panel was able to form the view that assessment standards, policy and processes are effectively evaluated and fit for purpose.
- 7.5 The Audit Panel found clear evidence that CityU offers comprehensive and effective services and support to local, non-local and exchange students at every level. Four core principles define the aim of supporting and improving students on their programmes and in the wider community and apply across the student journey from induction, progression and personal development to graduation and employment. There is a diverse set of student orientation programmes customised for different student groups. CityU provides strong support for students' personal, professional and academic development. The Tiger Programme, assistance for SEN students and the IDEA Campaign promote an inclusive campus culture. International cross-cultural learning opportunities are provided for students at all levels. Student feedback is actively sought through multiple channels. The Academic Advising Scheme responds to students' needs but it could be more comprehensively and consistently implemented across all

AUs to ensure that academic advising is undertaken in line with institutional policy. The Audit Panel concluded that CityU provides strong support to students throughout their time at and beyond the University.

- 7.6 CityU has a developing culture and practice of using data to deliver measurable outcomes, led by the Strategic Plan which prioritises the collection, analysis and use of data in its management of academic quality and standards. The University's Data Strategy has clear objectives and guidance and is underpinned by the Data Governance Policy. The Audit Panel learned that the University uses locally collected data to enhance T&L but has the goal of moving towards a central data base for collection, analysis and use of data. KPIs help CityU meet its institutional vision, mission and strategic focus. There is effective use of benchmarking data and external experts in developing the academic portfolio and identification of in review processes. The Panel considered that the University is making good progress with its collection, analysis and reflection on data collection and usage.

APPENDIX A: CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

[Information provided by the University]

History

City University of Hong Kong (CityU) was established in 1984, originally named City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, and initially offered only sub-degree (SD) programmes. CityU was granted university status in 1994, allowing it to independently confer degrees. Today, CityU provides full degree programmes at both undergraduate (Ug) and postgraduate (Pg) levels, including taught postgraduate (TPg), professional doctorate (PD) and research postgraduate (RPg) programmes.

In 1991, the School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE) was established as the self-financed extension of CityU. The School provides life-long education for professional practice, retraining, and self-development, thereby supporting career advancement. The School also manages self-financed sub-degree programmes.

Vision and Mission

Vision

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

Mission

CityU is committed to nurture and develop students' talents and to create applicable knowledge for social and economic advancement.

Role Statement

CityU:

- (a) offers a range of professionally oriented programmes leading to the award of first degrees, and a small number of SD programmes;
- (b) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (c) offers a number of TPg programmes and RPg programmes in selected subject areas particularly in professional and applied fields;
- (d) emphasises application-oriented teaching, professional education and applied research;
- (e) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength;
- (f) emphasises high value-added educational programmes for whole person development and professional competencies and skills;
- (g) maintains strong links with business, industry, professional sectors, employers as well as the community;

- (h) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (i) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (j) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

Governance and Management

CityU is governed by its Council, Court and the Senate. The Council is the supreme governing body of the University and, as such, may exercise all powers conferred and shall perform all of the duties imposed on the University by the *City University of Hong Kong Ordinance*.

The President, acting as the chief executive officer, oversees all academic and administrative functions of the University, including chairing both the Management Board and the Senate. The President is supported by the Senior Management Team, which is made up of the Provost and Deputy President, Secretary to Council, a Senior Vice-President, Vice-Presidents, and an Associate Vice-President. These individuals are appointed to oversee various facets of the University's operations. Their responsibilities encompass academic planning and development, research advancement, innovation and enterprise, talent and international strategy, Mainland strategy, community engagement, and institutional administration.

Academic Organisation and Programmes of Study

CityU is organised into five Colleges (i.e. College of Business; College of Engineering; College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences; College of Science; and Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences) and five Schools (i.e. School of Creative Media; School of Data Science; School of Energy and Environment; School of Law; and Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies) offering Ug, TPg, PD and RPg programmes.

The SCOPE offers self-financed programmes at Qualifications Framework Level 5 or below, such as certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, professional certificate and professional diploma levels, leading to SCOPE award. Programme duration ranges from 100 contact hours to two years. The School also provides degree, top-up degree and Pg programmes which lead to non-local awards with overseas universities. The SD provision accounts for a small part of SCOPE's programme portfolio.

Staff and Student Numbers

In the 2023/24 academic year, the University had 11 858 Ug and 1 035 Pg students in UGC-funded programmes. Enrolments in self-financed programmes accounted for a further 8 422 students. Academic staff comprises 803 regular and 25 visiting and short-term staff to give a total of 828. 98.4% of academic staff members have doctoral degrees.

In the same year, SCOPE had 28 full-time and 1 757 part-time students enrolled in programmes leading to SCOPE award. Academic staff supporting these programmes comprises three full-time and 64 part-time staff to give a total of 67. 90% of the academic staff members hold master's degrees or above, while 21% possess doctoral degrees.

Revenue

Consolidated income for the year 2022/23 was HK\$5,919 million of which HK\$3,268 million (55%) came from government subvention and HK\$2,651 million (45%) from tuition, programmes, interest and net investment income, donations, auxiliary services and other income.

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT FINDINGS

City University of Hong Kong (CityU) expresses its heartfelt gratitude to the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Committee (UGC), the Audit Panel, the Audit Coordinator, and UGC colleagues for their expertise, dedication, and efforts in planning and conducting the audit exercise. CityU greatly appreciates the thorough evaluation of its strategic approach to quality assurance and the initiatives that emerge from it.

CityU is delighted with the Audit Panel's commendable core conclusions that recognise the University's robust and evaluative framework for academic governance, a rigorous approach to programme development, approval, monitoring and review, a well-developed, mature and dynamic governance, policy framework, implementation practices, and self-reflection mechanisms for assessment, effective alignment of learning and teaching related policies and governance procedure with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, and comprehensive and effective services and support to local, non-local and exchange students at all levels.

CityU is committed to nurture students' talents and create applicable knowledge for social and economic advancement, and preparing them for employment and social contribution. The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, aligned with the Strategic Plan 2020-25, emphasises an inclusive and supportive learning environment where all students can learn in an effective, institutional, inspirational, interactive, and innovative way. CityU welcomes the Audit Panel's substantiation of its successful implementation of various academic initiatives in support of the core elements of this strategy (paragraph 1.2). The Audit Panel also confirmed the University's 'effective framework for quality assurance and enhancement enabling it to maintain effective oversight of academic standards and quality' (paragraph 1.8). CityU's approach to benchmarking of its academic programmes was also considered effective by the Audit Panel (paragraph 1.10).

CityU appreciates the positive feedback from the Audit Panel on its good practice in successfully creating the flexibility for students to pursue personalised educational paths through different study options, catering to their unique interests and career goals (paragraph 2.10). This is evidenced by a significant number of multidisciplinary programmes in single or dual degree format, integration of Bachelor and Masters' level programmes, and a growing number of taught postgraduate level programme (paragraph 2.3). The Audit Panel also noted the impressive number of students who capitalised on the outside classroom learning opportunities, such as research projects, workplace learning, internships and international exchange programmes (paragraph 2.12). These experiences not only enrich students' educational journey, but also equip them with the necessary skills to tackle global challenges.

The University is encouraged by the Audit Panel's acknowledgement of its commitment to supporting and training teaching staff, including the good practice of mentorship programme and the Teaching Start-up Grant for new staff (paragraph 3.4). The Audit

Panel recognised the University's commitments in supporting RPg programmes and young faculty members, maintaining high standards for staff appointments and promotions, and efforts to enhance student diversity and overseas learning experiences (paragraph 3.14). The Audit Panel also identified the University's 'thorough and systematic approach to evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning (T&L) across its programmes' (paragraph 3.14).

The University welcomes the Audit Panel's affirmation of its well-developed and transparent assessment policies which provide 'a clear framework of accountability and set standard expectations for key aspects of assessment' (paragraph 4.1). The Audit Panel considered the assessment standards, policy and processes effectively evaluated and fit for purpose (paragraph 4.9). The regular course review by academic units (AUs) (paragraph 4.3), coupled with extensive external benchmarking in assessment design and procedures, ensures the courses' continuing relevance and adherence to the University's standards. Students are well informed of the assessment criteria through various means (paragraph 4.4), with RPg students expressing particular appreciation for the high quality of supervision provided. The supervision has been instrumental in helping the RPg students integrate with their College/School and comprehend the content and procedures of assessment (paragraph 4.8).

The University has established a robust infrastructure and mechanism to provide comprehensive and effective support services to students at all levels, fostering their personal, professional and academic development (paragraph 5.2). The Audit Panel confirmed the University's high-quality induction programmes in aiding students' integration into CityU (paragraph 5.3). CityU appreciates the Audit Panel's commendation of its effective initiative of proactively inviting 'at risk' students with special educational needs to seek support from the University's counselling service as a feature of good practice (paragraph 5.7).

Attaching great emphasis to make meaningful use of internal and external benchmark data and external reference points in decision-making for continuous development (paragraph 6.5), CityU is pleased that Audit Panel found 'a strong data-driven approach to the oversight of student performance, academic standards and the quality of programmes' (paragraph 7.1) and 'a developing culture and practice of using data to deliver measurable outcomes' (paragraph 6.10), which prioritises the collection, analysis and use of data in its decision-making processes. The Panel also recognised the University's 'good progress with its Data Strategy' (paragraph 6.10), underpinned by the Data Governance Policy, in facilitating the development of common processes for data collection, utilisation and security. The Audit Panel also noted that the incorporation of data literacy training programmes into the curriculum as a means to equip students with necessary transferable skills (paragraph 6.6).

Aiming to further enhance students' learning experiences, CityU agrees with the Audit Panel's recommendations for a regular, more comprehensive, and systematic review of T&L data at an institutional level (paragraph 3.6). This could help identify thematic issues. CityU also supports the idea of a more consistent implementation of the

Academic Advising Scheme across all AUs (paragraph 5.5), ensuring that the Scheme aligns with the institutional policy.

As CityU aspires to become a leading global university, excelling in research and professional education, it embraces the Quality Audit exercise as a pivotal step toward the vision. The University is grateful for the Audit Panel's measured and professional advice which will surely contribute significantly to the enhancement of the University's educational provision.

APPENDIX C: ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADMO	Admissions Office
APC	Academic Policy Committee
APRe	Annual Programme Report
AU	Academic Unit
BGS	Board of Graduate Studies
BUS	Board of Undergraduate Studies
CIRO	Communications and Institutional Research Office
CityU	City University of Hong Kong
CityU-QAC	Quality Assurance Committee of CityU
DAA	Departmental Academic Advisor
DAC	Departmental Advisory Committee
DoS	Dean of Students
EAA	External Academic Advisor
GenAI	Generative Artificial Intelligence
GEO	Global Engagement Office
GES	Graduate Employment Survey
IDEA Campaign	Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Awareness Campaign
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
OBTL	Outcomes-Based Teaching and Learning
Pg	Postgraduate
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
RoE	Review of Academic Excellence
RPg	Research Postgraduate
SCOPE	School of Continuing and Professional Education
SDS	Student Development Services
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SGS	Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies
SLES	Student Learning Experience Survey

TED	Talent and Education Development Office
T&L	Teaching and Learning
TLQ	Teaching and Learning Questionnaire
TPg	Taught Postgraduate
Ug	Undergraduate
UAA	University Accountability Agreement
UGC	University Grants Committee

APPENDIX D: CITYU AUDIT PANEL

The Audit Panel comprised the following:

Professor Helen MARSHALL (Panel Chair)
Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Salford

Professor CHAN Lung-sang
Honorary Professor, Department of Earth Sciences, The University of Hong Kong

Mr Ian HAWKE
Higher Education Consultant
Formerly Founding Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner, Tertiary Education
Quality and Standards Agency, Australia

Professor YUEN Pong-chi
Associate Dean of Science (Teaching and Learning) and Chair Professor, Department
of Computer Science, Hong Kong Baptist University

Audit Coordinator

Dr Neil CASEY
QAC Secretariat

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

The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) was formally 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.

Mission

The 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

The QAC has the following terms of reference:

- (a) To advise the UGC on quality assurance (QA) 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 the UGC, and report on the QA mechanisms and quality of the offerings of universities;
- (c) To promote QA in the higher education sector in Hong Kong; and
- (d) To facilitate the development and dissemination of good practices in QA in higher education.

Membership (as at October 2024)

Professor Jan THOMAS (Chair)	Vice-Chancellor, Massey University
Professor Simon BATES	Vice Provost and Associate Vice President, Teaching and Learning, The University of British Columbia
Dr Benjamin CHAN Wai-kai, MH	Chief Principal, Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School
Professor Jimmy FUNG Chi-hung	Associate Provost (Teaching & Learning), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Professor Sir Chris HUSBANDS	Former Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield Hallam University
Professor Julie LI Juan	Associate Vice-President (Mainland Strategy), City University of Hong Kong
Professor Marilee LUDVIK	Director, Academic Effectiveness, Office of the Provost and Professor of Practice, School of Leadership and Education Sciences, University of San Diego
Ms Phoebe TSE Siu-ling	General Manager, Commercial Banking Department, Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited
Dr Carrie WILLIS, SBS, JP	Former Chairperson, Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals

Ex-officio Member

Professor James TANG Tuck-hong	Secretary-General, UGC
--------------------------------	------------------------

Secretary

Mr Louis LEUNG	Deputy Secretary-General (1), UGC
----------------	-----------------------------------