

Third Audit Cycle of the Quality Assurance Council

Report of Quality Audit of Lingnan University

June 2025

Quality Assurance Council



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

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PREFACE

Background

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

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 (ToR) 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 Lingnan University (LU; 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?
- 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 University’s framework for managing academic standards and academic quality is set within the context of the Strategic Plan 2022-28. The framework consists of an extensive hierarchy of committees and a range of processes for monitoring, review and enhancement, formalised through policies, procedures and guidelines. The committees operate at programme, department, school/faculty and university levels, culminating in the Senate, which has the power to regulate teaching and research and to keep the quality of courses and programmes under review. Key committees at the university level for quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE) are Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) for Undergraduate (Ug) Programmes and Postgraduate (Pg) Studies Committee (PSC) for Pg Programmes. The Audit Panel found that committees are invited to review their ToR annually and that they function effectively in receiving reports and providing feedback on proposals and evaluations.

Major processes for managing academic standards and academic quality include regular five-year programme reviews and annual programme reviews (APRs). Other key processes involve the collection and analysis of feedback from various stakeholders, including external advice and benchmarking from advisory/professional bodies, student evaluations (Course Teaching and Learning Enhancement/Evaluation), and consultation committees (Staff-Student Consultation Committees (SSCCs)). The Audit

Panel found that this information is taken seriously, used effectively, and analysed for improvement across multiple levels.

The policies, procedures, and guidelines are collated in manuals, particularly the Academic Quality Assurance Manual (AQAM) for the University and the Lingnan Institute of Further Education (LIFE) QA Manual. The Audit Panel suggests that the University adopt a more standardised approach towards the regular review and alignment of policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure their ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

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

All new educational offerings are based on a multi-stage approach to development, accountability and approval, with a set of committees, as noted above, enabling a system of checks and balances throughout the University. Deans are responsible for reviewing and managing Ug programmes on a triennial basis. The roles and responsibilities of the various committees are clearly specified and guided by a comprehensive suite of policies, templates and guidelines embedded in the AQAM. The Audit Panel found that the AQAM functions as an integrated and well-understood tool for the work on quality assurance. Various institutional data are used for monitoring programme performance, and a range of data and surveys represent the backbone of the information that goes into the mandatory APRs and five-year reviews. Standards are upheld through a well-implemented internal system of graduate attributes (GAs). Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) and Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) define programme content, while programme quality is compared internationally through external benchmarks with input from External Academic Advisors (EAAs) and Advisory Boards (ABs). Thus, external views and perspectives are incorporated into the quality assurance procedures and practices through a range of formats.

3. Review and enhancement of teaching and learning

The University demonstrates a commitment to reviewing and enhancing teaching and learning through a comprehensive, institutionalised, and evidence-based approach. The Audit Panel found that LU uses a range of evaluation metrics, such as student feedback questionnaires, focus group interviews, peer reviews, and learning analytics, to inform teaching and learning quality. The University management makes use of these metrics, and the Audit Panel found that the collected data functions effectively to provide feedback on teaching and learning quality. The University could further evaluate how it makes use of Learning Analytics and Teaching and Learning Data Warehouse (TLDW) and regularly validate the relevance and effectiveness of the data collected to ensure they inform professional development and teaching improvements.

There is evidence that the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) plays a lead role in providing comprehensive resources, courses, and workshops for professional development and teaching support, particularly for helping faculty develop in areas

related to digital education. The Audit Panel found evidence that the University has updated its e-Learning strategies and guidelines and is actively reviewing the impact of developing technologies on teaching and learning, such as Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI/GAI). The Audit Panel would like to draw LU's attention to a need for formalising policies, particularly with regard to GenAI. The Audit Panel recognises the importance of a strong teacher-student relationship as a key element of quality education at LU.

4. Review and enhancement of student learning assessment

The University has a comprehensive system to ensure fair assessment of student learning, incorporating necessary external reference points and benchmarking exercises to uphold academic standards. A range of policies and routines are in place for the assessment of student learning, emphasising criterion-referenced assessment. Students are informed about intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and assessment standards through different platforms and modes. Following the previous quality audit, greater diversity in examination modes and formats has been developed. The current Audit Panel found evidence that assessment practices accommodate a wide range of skills and competencies. Assessment modes and formats are reviewed by different entities and committees to ensure the maintenance of standards and fairness. LU places much emphasis on the link between learning outcomes and assessments, and procedures are in place to secure alignment. The University has also been proactive with respect to allowing GenAI for student learning, although not all current practices and guidelines have been formalised into policies. Much emphasis is placed on academic integrity and honesty, with all students required to undertake a course on plagiarism awareness and ethical use of GenAI. The University benchmarks assessment standards in a number of ways, not least by ensuring consideration of assessment standards as central to the five-year programme review. Documented evidence of continuous improvement in assessment practices in a number of programmes was noted by the Audit Panel.

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

The University is committed to providing strong student support for SD, Ug, taught postgraduate (TPg) and research postgraduate (RPg) students. The Panel found evidence of the effective provision of student support through a wide range of non-formal learning activities. Subject teachers, academic advisors (AAs), and staff from various units together provide non-formal learning support. Close communication among colleagues, coupled with the use of the University's Early Alert System (EAS), enables feedback and support for students in their academic performance, progression and non-formal learning. The Audit Panel also found evidence that learning activities beyond those in formal classroom settings, such as short-term and long-term exchange programmes, internships and service-learning programmes, are provided to enrich students' educational experiences. The provision of such activities is designed to achieve the GAs, which are aligned with the core spirit of Liberal Arts Education.

Regular reviews of participation rates and student satisfaction are in place to enhance the provision of student support. Student feedback, both formally and informally, and quantitatively and qualitatively, is regularly collected. The Audit Panel noted that measures are taken to address the changing student demographic profile, such as an increasing number of students with special educational needs (SEN) and those requiring psychological services. Overall, the Audit Panel recognised that the University has worked together with its committed teaching force to put in place comprehensive and effective provisions for student support, which are essential to the whole-person development of students at all levels of study. To further enhance student support and cope with the ever-changing student profile and needs, the University is advised to establish proactive, forward-looking institutional strategies for the provision of student support in order to pre-empt the potential changes in student demographics.

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

LU collects and stores all significant institutional data centrally, especially in relation to strategic planning, annual submissions to the UGC and the triennial planning exercise. This centralised coordination and collection of data is supported by data governance, destruction and removal policies, as well as an up-to-date policy for protection of personal data. The centralised collection and storage of data is beneficial, enabling access by senior staff.

The use of data for enhancement has been accelerated since the appointment of the new President and is reflected in the current Strategic Plan, which emphasises ‘Optimising Liberal Arts Education in the Digital Era’ by pivoting the traditional emphasis on teaching excellence towards effective use of data. This strategic shift is epitomised by the creation of a School of Data Science.

The Audit Panel found widespread evidence of the analysis and use of data. The University has developed several Data Repository Systems (DRS) that have expanded from data on admissions to bring together information from the TLDW to track course and teacher performance for improvement. Data is used effectively in the APRs and five-year programme reviews, including survey and benchmarking data, and advice from external advisers, employers, and alumni. Survey data is also used to enhance the student experience and student support. The University is at an early stage in integrating behavioural data from Learning Analytics into its comprehensive use of data for improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Explanation of the audit methodology

This is the report of a quality audit of LU 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 LU and submitted to QAC on 14 June 2024. Initial Private Meetings of Panel members were held on 20 and 21 August 2024 to plan for the audit visit and this was followed on 23 August 2024 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 the University between 15 and 25 October 2024. Panel members met with the President and senior team; a representative group of students on taught programmes; a representative group of RPg students; academic managers and supervisors; external stakeholders and staff from academic support services. The Panel also received demonstrations of the DRS.

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 teaching and learning ?
- 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

LU was founded in 1967 in Hong Kong as Lingnan College. It was renamed Lingnan University in 1999. The University's vision states that the University is to excel as a leading Asian quality education university with international recognition, distinguished by outstanding teaching, learning, scholarship and community engagement. LU's mission is to provide quality whole-person education by combining the best of the Chinese and Western liberal arts traditions to nurture students to achieve all-round excellence and imbuing them with its core values, and to encourage faculty and students to contribute to society through original research and knowledge transfer.

LU's faculties and schools offer Ug, TPg and RPg programmes, while LIFE offers a variety of SD programmes. LU's educational approach emphasises a broad-based curriculum, close staff-student relationships, vibrant residential campus life, diverse extra-curricular activities, proactive community service, extensive workplace experience, global alumni network and impact, and global learning opportunities.

In the 2023-24 academic year, LU had 6 041 Ug and Pg students, including 3 594 Ug (with 3 015 UGC-funded students), and 2 447 TPg and RPg students, in addition to 2 392 students of LIFE (including SD, diploma and short courses).

During the same period, LU (including LIFE) had 1 109 staff, including 318 academic/teaching staff and 791 administrative staff.

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

- 1.1 The LU is a small liberal arts university that has a serious, clear, and comprehensive approach to the academic governance of all its educational offerings and the management of academic standards and quality of the student academic experience.
- 1.2 LU's educational approach emphasises a broad-based curriculum, close staff-student relationships, vibrant residential campus life, diverse extra-curricular activities, proactive community service, extensive workplace experience, a global alumni network and impact, and global learning opportunities. It is multi-faceted and focused on education of the whole person as well as academic excellence.
- 1.3 The University's educational approach is set within the context of its Strategic Plan 2022-28, and there is alignment between the stated Mission and Vision and its subsequent managerial and administrative implementation. The strategic directions outlined in the Strategic Plan 2022-28 have been developed from the preceding plan to include 'Optimising Liberal Arts Education in the Digital Era', demonstrating a clear focus on digital matters.
- 1.4 LU provided substantial evidence that its activities are guided by this multi-level approach. University staff expressed during interviews that the combination of Western and Chinese liberal arts traditions is particularly evident in their determination to provide 'whole-person education' and service-learning, combined with the Western broad-based, interdisciplinary tradition of Liberal Arts.
- 1.5 At the strategic level, the framework for managing academic standards and quality is bounded by a set of sector-wide Performance Measures (PMs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The University has a Working Group (WG) on

Performance Indicators, which leads the implementation and development of the Performance Indicators for the Strategic Plan and the UGC Compact. The Sector-wide PMs and KPIs have been established, benchmarked against leading liberal arts institutions and aligned with the University Accountability Agreement (UAA). The WG on Performance Indicators reviews the UAA and Common Data Collection Format (CDCF) data before submission to the University and UGC. The Audit Panel was advised that this group had initiated discussions and changes in matters such as capstone units and service-learning. PMs are collected and used to monitor performance at the university level, such as enrolment and graduation rates, research outputs, programme impact on student learning and success, and feedback from stakeholders. The strategic level of the framework for managing academic standards and quality is reviewed and improved regularly, influenced by the rhythm of the triennium.

- 1.6 The focus on digital era liberal arts education for 2022-28 uses a comprehensive suite of data sets to support the University's Mission, including survey and registry data, as well as data benchmarked not only internally but also within Hong Kong and with other similar international institutions. Similarly, LIFE benchmarks with other pre-degree colleges in Hong Kong. The use of data is discussed more fully under the theme of this audit.
- 1.7 The framework for the management of academic standards and quality consists of a set of structures, essentially committees, of QA and QE processes or mechanisms, guided by policies and procedures, such as the Blended-Learning Policy and Guidelines: Learning and Teaching in a Digital Age.
- 1.8 The academic governance committee structure culminates in the Senate, which reports to the Council. The Senate has the responsibility to regulate teaching and research and to keep the quality of courses and programmes under review. Key committees at the university level for QA and QE are AQAC for Ug Programmes and PSC for Pg programmes. Sub-institutional committees for QA and QE comprise Faculty's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee, Faculty Boards (FBs) for three faculties, Board of Graduate Studies (BGS) (for School of Graduate Studies (GS)), School of Interdisciplinary Studies Management Board (SISMB) (for School of Interdisciplinary Studies (SIS), established in July 2022), and the School of Data Science Management Board (for School of Data Science, approved to be established in July 2024). QA and QE of SD programmes occur through the Committee on Academic Quality Assurance of Sub-degree Programmes (CAQA) and the LIFE Management Board, notably its Programme Quality and Management Committee (PQMC). Each programme also has a SSCC to receive and consider feedback from students. The most recent and proposed changes to the committee structures are the Boards for the SIS and the School of Data Science. Apart from these additions, the committee structure has been relatively stable, although formal committees are invited to review their ToR annually (see paragraph 1.11).

- 1.9 The President and Central Administration oversees a range of committees concerned with corporate matters and central administration, managing key functions such as risk management, steering group on Strategic Planning, and the Management Board on Internationalisation, along with operational management areas such as catering, health, safety and environment, and the Student Hostels Management Committee.
- 1.10 The Audit Panel investigated whether this comprehensive set of academic committees operated effectively, both as a series of checks and balances, and as effective upward reporting mechanisms. Committee minutes showed that the hierarchy of committees works effectively, for example, in one programme examined in detail, changes to courses were on occasions approved, and in other cases sent back for reconsideration. AQAC took into consideration the potential impact of such changes on other courses, as did PSC which also considered consequential changes to templates, demonstrating thoughtful and careful deliberations. Similarly, SSCCs provide feedback to students, although it is suggested that action sheets for SSCCs could be useful for capturing feedback and follow-up to matters raised.
- 1.11 Formal committees are invited to review their ToR annually in order to keep the framework for managing academic standards and quality current and fit for purpose. This invitation is not extended to less formal groups, such as the WG on Performance Indicators, which continues to operate under outdated ToR, including references to the previous Strategic Plan. While the WG considers the ToR at every meeting, no updates had been made. It is suggested that the invitation to review ToR annually be extended to less formal groups as well as formal committees.
- 1.12 The major processes for managing academic standards and academic quality include regular five-year programme reviews and APRs. Other key processes involve the collection and analysis of feedback from various stakeholders, including from external advice and benchmarking, defined as advisory/professional bodies, student evaluations (Course Teaching and Learning Evaluations/Enhancement (CTLE)), employers and alumni. The Audit Panel found that this information was taken seriously, used effectively, and analysed for improvement at several levels. The use of survey data was considered in more detail under the Audit Theme.
- 1.13 The APRs show strong use of data-rich evidence, such as an indicator unfavourably compared against the University set threshold was flagged for attention, with evidence of follow-up. Five-year programme reviews are also evidence-based. Responses to recommendations are required and scrutinised by relevant committees.
- 1.14 The use of external advice is mandatory. Sample EAA reports in APRs show well-directed comments to which the University responds. External advice is

further brought in through an extensive array of surveys. EAAs interviewed provided examples of where their advice had been heard and implemented, such as adopting a more interdisciplinary approach to a subject area, and a more innovative approach to GenAI, and even different ways of structuring an office of the University which changed and improved interactions with alumni.

- 1.15 The Audit Panel found that processes or mechanisms such as the APR, five-year programme reviews, surveys and use of external advice that form part of the framework for managing academic quality and standards are reviewed and improved on a regular basis.
- 1.16 The policies, procedures, and guidelines used in the QA/QE framework are collated in manuals, particularly the AQAM for the University and the LIFE QA Manual. The AQAM stands out as a key integrative tool for the work securing quality, and as a tool that is actively used throughout the University. Leadership at different levels, academic and administrative staff are very familiar with standards, templates and guidelines for making quality assurance effective and coherent over time. In general, routines and procedures are clearly spelled out, and roles and responsibilities are understood by key staff. In this way, the formal system of QA is well integrated with the day-to-day practice of quality processes performed by LU staff.
- 1.17 While there is evidence of periodic review of QA processes for continued enhancement, there is limited evidence of review of policy and procedure, and no evidence of a policy that specifies a time period between policy reviews. The Panel was advised that the AQAM is revised each year, and the version provided is dated 2024, but there are policies which clearly require updating in a timely manner to reflect the latest trends and developments, particularly in the case of the Assessment Guidelines (2017) which needs to be aligned with other guidance on the use of GenAI (see recommendation in paragraph 1.19).
- 1.18 The ‘Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments’ (July 2023) states the general principle that GenAI is allowed in Course Assignment and Assessment (Open book), but not in Course Assessments (Closed book) or Final Examinations (Closed book). It also states that academic integrity is of paramount importance and refers to the 2017 Assessment Guidelines.
- 1.19 However, the use of GenAI is not referred to in that policy, as it was not commonly used at that time, and so is not mentioned in the section on ‘academic integrity and honesty’. Similarly, the ‘how to reference’ section in that policy does not include referencing AI-generated material. The reference to the 2017 Assessment Guidelines, which has yet to be updated, in the latest (2024) document may be potentially confusing for students and staff. The Audit Panel was advised that the guidelines on the use of GenAI were approved by the Senate to become a policy during the period of the Audit Visit, so this specific issue may

be resolved. Nonetheless, policy reviews could be more regular and formalised (see also paragraphs 1.17 and 1.18). The Audit Panel **recommends that policies, procedures, and guidelines should be reviewed and internally aligned on a more regular basis.** A regular schedule for policy and procedural review would be a valuable complement to the ongoing reviews of KPIs and PMs, QA/QE mechanisms and processes, and the ToR of formal committees, thus ensuring that all elements of the framework for managing academic standards and quality are continually reviewed and enhanced.

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

- 2.1 LU has a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures for programme development, curriculum design, approval, programme and course monitoring, with clearly defined review schedules. These procedures cover both Ug and TPg programmes. All routines and procedures are clearly set out in the AQAM, specifying roles and responsibilities for different tasks. Specific committees are delegated tasks and responsibilities, with the Senate having overarching responsibility for quality assurance decisions.
- 2.2 New programmes at LU are based on a multi-stage approach to development, including the initiating phase, the planning of the programme, and routines that ensure new offerings are sound and sustainable. Different committees are engaged at different stages, enabling a system of checks and balances throughout the university. The processes are comprehensive, and could be seen as complex, but meetings held by the Audit Panel with LU representatives demonstrated the division of labour and the distinct roles of the various committees are clearly understood.
- 2.3 With respect to the development of the portfolio of programmes, Deans have a special responsibility to conduct triennial reviews, and the portfolio development process involves all faculties and schools. The portfolio development occurs in concert with triennial planning. New programmes require justifications based on LU's strategy, market needs, academic characteristics, and/or societal demands, including the strategic directions of the HKSAR Government. Data informing the development of the overarching portfolio is compiled through survey approaches and consultation meetings with external stakeholders, including employers and EAAs. Evidence was provided on how societal demands influence programme development, for example the establishment of the Master of Cities and Governance in 2020 in response to HKSAR's Smart City Blueprint and LU's Strategic Plan. Another example is the establishment of the GS in 2019, which was aimed at strengthening Pg programme development. Following the establishment of the GS, LU has documented how infrastructure for admission and the follow-up of students has been strengthened, with an increased focus on ensuring Pg programmes have successful completion rates. The comprehensive

committee structure also functions as a means of communication when educational offerings that cross the internal organisational structures of LU are under development, for example interdisciplinary courses.

- 2.4 Curriculum development is clearly embedded in defined GAs, and the programme and course content are specified in PILOs and CILOs, which are also broadly exposed to input, not least from the TLC. A mapping process is conducted to ensure links between GA, PILOs/CILOs, and the ways skills and competencies are assessed and ensured. LU's approach to the overarching design of programmes and courses is based on Outcome-based Approaches to Teaching and Learning (OBATL). Department Boards (DB), Programme and Curriculum Committees (PCCs) and the Core Curriculum Committee have designated responsibilities for reviewing the coherence of the curriculum according to the OBATL. The final endorsement of curriculum content rests with the AQAC/PSC/Senate. The approach taken to curriculum design was assessed as effective by the Panel.
- 2.5 Programme monitoring is data-driven, and the TLDW provides a one-stop shop for acquiring quantitative data on programme performance over time and in comparison with other programmes. LU has, since the 2016 audit conducted by the UGC, enhanced its capacity for systematic programme monitoring by developing the TLDW as a comprehensive management information system. Defined KPIs are used as key metrics for monitoring the development of programmes over time.
- 2.6 A standard feature of LU's data-driven approach is the formal requirement mandated by the Senate that APR of Ug programmes should contain data on 14 pre-defined areas and guidance on how these data should be analysed. TPg programmes are required to use pre-defined templates for data utilisation. These requirements facilitate an institutional-wide joint approach to data usage and exploitation.
- 2.7 The programme monitoring process incorporates external input and benchmarks are secured through comparisons with pre-defined benchmark institutions found in the AQAM. External input is, in addition, secured through a system of EAAs and ABs for each programme to continuously align programme characteristics with industry requirements and developments. For RPg students, external references are gathered through meta-reflections conducted by input from external examiners and graduate surveys.
- 2.8 For LIFE programmes, external input is of particular importance, with a systematic approach to their programmes development and monitoring, where ABs offer insights and perspectives regarding industry developments and market needs. For each SD programme, EAAs monitor selected courses that are offered to ensure coherence and relevance. In addition, graduate and employer surveys

are regularly conducted to align programme content with the attributes required in relevant sectors and industries.

- 2.9 The key programme review elements of LU are the APR and the five-year programme reviews. APRs, which cover all Ug/TPg programmes, serve as the instrument for DB/PCC to analyse programme performance. In the APRs, statistics on admission, progression and graduation rates are annually updated, and areas for improvement are identified. Input is also collected from CTLE, relevant survey results, SSCC, assessment analysis, EAA, AB, and where applicable, professional bodies. APR Reports are endorsed by the FBs, BGS, or SISMB, and further reviewed by the PSC/AQAC.
- 2.10 Since 2019-20, an additional meta-review procedure has been implemented, whereby a new body, the Small Group to Scrutinise Annual Programme Reports, conducts a formative check of the APRs for TPg programmes. This group includes representatives from each faculty or school, fostering a systematic approach that promotes institutional learning across LU. The Registry conducts a similar procedure for Ug programmes. The Panel considers **this initiative a feature of good practice.**
- 2.11 The five-year review is more comprehensive than the APRs and follows a standardised procedure that includes the documentation of (1) programme standards, (2) programme objectives and ILOs, (3) stakeholder input/perceived problems, (4) programme management and (5) modifications and developments from the previous period. External input is secured through EAAs and external reviewers. Based on the review conducted by PCC/DB, plans for further development are formulated. The five-year programme reviews are also an opportunity to discuss issues related to the continuation or closure of programmes. For LIFE programmes, broader programme reviews are conducted every four years, applying the same standardised procedure, although followed up through LIFE PQMC, LIFE Management Board and CAQA.
- 2.12 LU provided the Audit Panel with evidence of improvements over time as a result of the systematic work it had undertaken on quality. The work on improving quality relates both to the quality assurance system as such, and improvement related to individual programmes. For example, the AQAC and the PSC have recently conducted evaluations of existing approaches and measures for securing and enhancing academic standards and external benchmarking. LU bodies, such as the Office of Internal Audit, have also conducted reviews of how the routines and procedures related to quality assurance operate in practice, providing the management and leadership of LU with an ‘independent’ perspective on the effectiveness of existing systems.
- 2.13 With respect to improvement actions taken at the faculty and school level, the Audit Panel identified and acknowledged several processes where learning and sharing of good practice takes place across organisational borders. For example,

a special sub-committee has been set up in the Faculty of Arts to share good practices in the admission, development and branding of TPg programmes. This committee has developed operational guidelines for the above-mentioned practices and routines, and internal workshops have been organised to enhance student learning.

- 2.14 Improvement and enhancement processes are also driven through a range of external inputs and through dialogue and cooperation with external stakeholders and joint programmes. Evidence includes how US-based Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) standards are applied at Bachelor of Business Administration level in business, the development of a new Doctor of Business Administration programme in Global Digital Economy and Governance, and the development of several joint degree programmes at Master's level with relevant higher education institutions in countries such as UK, France, and Spain. More in-depth case examples also demonstrate continuous improvement of programmes at master level over a number of years.
- 2.15 LU also has a comprehensive system for monitoring and improving RPg programmes. These approaches and procedures are well aligned with international standards and include self-reporting exercises by RPg students and their supervisors, progression data, and annual status overviews. Students are appreciative of the support they receive, highlighting the close relationships between RPg students and their supervisors, including the option to change supervisors if issues arise. RPg students also have opportunities to take courses at partner universities in Hong Kong and abroad. A meeting with RPg managers and supervisors further emphasised opportunities for RPg students to attend international conferences and research seminars with global scholars, contributing to securing international standards for RPg students.
- 2.16 The system for developing, monitoring and reviewing the educational offers at LU is very effective and well-functioning. Effective practices include a data-rich, comprehensive and systemic approach to APRs and five-year reviews. Documented evidence demonstrates how comparisons of data against institutional performance averages have resulted in management attention and follow-up. Survey approaches to data collection are predominant in creating a data-rich environment, but these are used in a variety of formats and circumstances, including CTLE, graduate surveys, and employer surveys.
- 2.17 The Audit Panel identified opportunities for further development in the area of 'learning analytics designs'. Currently, most data in the TLDW are register and survey data, and developments have taken place with respect to the continuous improvement of these data. However, with the increasing use of digital learning environments and digital learning platforms, other types of data might be open for exploitation where not only self-reported data from students, but also their learning behaviour is tracked and analysed. This could open up new avenues and insights with respect to monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the

programmes offered. Therefore, the Audit Panel suggests that LU may further improve the ways in which the educational portfolio is developed and managed.

- 2.18 As a university with a strong liberal arts tradition, LU systematically works with GAs and develops PILOs/CILOs in collaboration with external input. This external input is of high importance to the University, and as a consequence, it has established systematic relationships and networks with key external stakeholders and alumni. **The way it has established, maintained, and effectively used these relationships to continuously improve the academic portfolio is worthy of note as a feature of good practice.**
- 2.19 The Audit Panel was satisfied that LU has a rigorous approach to programme development, approval, monitoring and review, underpinned by effective policies, procedures and processes. There are strong links between GAs, PILOs and CILOs that provide a robust framework for the development and monitoring of the curriculum. This approach has led to systematic, incremental improvement over time. Notwithstanding, there remain opportunities for further structuring the ways in which institutional learning and the dissemination of good practices are organised and institutionalised across LU.

3. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 3.1 LU demonstrates a commitment to reviewing and enhancing teaching and learning through a comprehensive, institutionalised, and evidence-based approach. The Audit Panel found that LU uses a range of evaluation metrics, including student feedback questionnaires, focus group interviews, peer reviews, and learning analytics to inform teaching and learning quality. The collected data functions effectively to provide feedback on teaching and learning quality, ensuring continuous improvement. The University's approach to teaching quality is systematically embedded at multiple levels, evidenced by various data sources, including student feedback, demographic information, assessment outcomes, and employment statistics. LU's Learning and Teaching Strategy articulates its commitment to quality teaching and is aligned with the strategic area of 'Optimising Liberal Arts Education in the Digital Era'.
- 3.2 Key elements of LU's quality education include a broad-based curriculum, strong teacher-student relationships, a rich residential experience, extra-curricular learning activities, active community services, multi-faceted working experiences, a global alumni network and impact, and global learning experiences.
- 3.3 LU employs a comprehensive range of tools to evaluate and enhance teaching and learning. The evaluation metrics include student feedback questionnaires, peer reviews, focus group interviews, and learning analytics. Data from these sources are aggregated to inform strategic decisions and professional development, ensuring that evaluation data functions as effective quality control

mechanisms. For instance, LU utilises the TLDW to evaluate teaching effectiveness annually, sharing data with department heads for follow-up actions when poor evaluations are noted.

- 3.4 The Audit Panel acknowledges the effectiveness of LU's systematic approach of both mid-term and term-end CTLE surveys as evaluation mechanisms. There is evidence that these surveys provide valuable data that informs PCCs. The surveys measure aspects such as the use of technology and learning support. Additional information provides evidence that the review process is comprehensive and that the reports are clearly documented. However, the Audit Panel found minimal reference to how the validity or reliability of CTLE survey questions are reviewed.
- 3.5 The Audit Panel found that since the implementation of the TLDW, there is a more structured approach to using data in reporting processes, which enhances the review of teaching and learning. The Audit Panel suggests that LU evaluate how it makes use of Learning Analytics and its TLDW and regularly validate the relevance and effectiveness of the data collected to ensure it informs professional development and teaching and learning improvements.
- 3.6 The TLC plays a crucial role in supporting teaching quality through professional development and a strategic focus on four key areas: learning enhancement, learning design, learning innovation, and learning analytics. The Audit Panel acknowledges the significance of these four focus areas in the TLC's strategy at the University.
- 3.7 The TLC provides comprehensive resources, courses, and workshops for professional development, especially in digital education, which aligns well with evolving faculty needs. These resources, including workshops and courses, especially in digital education, demonstrate LU's proactive stance in preparing its faculty for evolving teaching demands.
- 3.8 LU's commitment to quality teaching extends to professional development through three distinct programmes: Supporting Learning and Teaching@Lingnan, Active Blended Learning Enhancement@Lingnan, and Approaches to Learning, Teaching, and Assessment@Lingnan. These initiatives align with the University's strategic priorities and provide comprehensive support for faculty development. The University also encourages the use of peer observations as a mechanism to enhance teaching quality, with support from the TLC to conduct these observations effectively.
- 3.9 LU has established clear guidelines for performance reviews at both research professor and teaching track ranks, which detail the evaluation criteria for teaching quality. The Audit Panel acknowledges LU's effective induction programme for new faculty and the Staff Orientation Programme. Furthermore, LU's Professional Development Framework, designed to address the diverse

needs of its academic staff, is applied comprehensively across all faculties, supporting continuous faculty improvement.

- 3.10 A notable feature of LU's approach is its focus on blended learning. The University has revised its Blended-Learning Policies and Guidelines to incorporate lessons learned from the pandemic, reflecting a commitment to adapting teaching strategies to support digital education and remote learning and embracing new trends in hybrid learning and AI-based tools like ChatGPT. In a meeting with Senior Managers, the Audit Panel was informed that LU is the first institution in Hong Kong to achieve international accreditation for the Active Blended Learning Enhancement course, emphasising its efforts to enhance blended learning experiences and maintain high standards.
- 3.11 The Audit Panel noted LU's commitment to enhancing teaching and learning in response to the impact of AI on education. For example, numerous GenAI workshops were delivered throughout 2023-24 for staff and students, and there will be a core course on GenAI for 2024-25. The AQAC's Sub-Committee on Teaching and Learning formulates and reviews policies, regulations and guidelines related to the quality assurance and enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment. LU is an early adopter of the UNESCO competency model for AI in education. This model helps assess skill gaps for effective integration of AI tools across faculties and informs faculty training needs.
- 3.12 LU has comprehensive strategies for reviewing and enhancing digital education, which ensures a dynamic and relevant educational experience. This includes the document titled 'Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments'. These initiatives foster continuous improvement in teaching methodologies and promote greater student learning experiences. The Audit Panel suggests that LU formalise policies, particularly regarding the use of GenAI, to ensure a consistent approach in teaching and assessment practices.
- 3.13 LU is committed to service-learning and aims to provide quality assurance through a process involving senior management and relevant committees. This is evident in committee progress updates, such as LU requiring problem-solving as part of the service-learning training. Students' problem-solving skills are enhanced through real-world experiences and sufficient guidance from Service-Learning coordinators and agency partners. Elements of design thinking, a creative problem-solving skill, have also been incorporated.
- 3.14 LU's emphasis on maintaining strong teacher-student relationships is evident, with supporting survey data indicating high levels of satisfaction among students. This strong teacher-student relationship is a key element of quality education, supported by survey evidence. This emphasis contributes to the University's distinct liberal arts philosophy, promoting a supportive and engaged learning environment. Furthermore, the EAS is used effectively to monitor students'

progress, providing feedback and allowing faculty to support students who may be struggling, thus enhancing overall teaching effectiveness.

- 3.15 The strong teacher-student relationship is highlighted by the Audit Panel as an example of quality education, as evidenced by high satisfaction scores from survey data. In meetings, students informed the Audit Panel that they have a positive student-teacher relationship. They commented on how small class sizes and the ease of communicating with professors contribute significantly to their learning experience. The Audit Panel, therefore, concluded that **the strong teacher-student relationship is a feature of good practice at LU.**
- 3.16 The University demonstrates a commitment to reviewing and enhancing teaching and learning through a comprehensive, institutionalised, and evidence-based approach. The TLC plays a lead role in providing comprehensive resources, courses, and workshops for professional development and teaching support, particularly for helping faculty develop in areas related to digital education. The Audit Panel found evidence that the University has updated its e-Learning strategies and guidelines and is actively reviewing the impact of developing technologies on teaching and learning, such as GenAI. The Audit Panel recognises the strong teacher-student relationship as a key element of quality education in LU.

4. REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 LU has a strong commitment to fair, transparent and effective assessment. The University has a comprehensive systemic approach for ensuring fair assessment of student learning, with necessary external reference points and benchmarking exercises to uphold academic standards. A key feature in the approach to student learning assessment is how forms and formats of examination and assessment are linked to ILOs/PILOs/CILOs, ensuring alignment between the academic ambitions of various educational offerings and the GAs, skills and competencies that match these ambitions.
- 4.2 A range of policies and processes have been developed by LU to guide assessment practices for Ug/Pg and LIFE programmes. Criterion-referenced assessment is in place for all courses offered, ensuring systematic outcome-based assessment designs throughout the university. The criteria applied are reviewed by relevant committees and entities (Heads of Department, Boards of Examiners and DB/PCC), and there are established processes for making any changes and modifications to existing criteria. However, the Audit Panel noted that the AQAM still includes assessment guidelines that were last updated in 2017. While LU has annual routines for reviewing assessment guidelines, the Audit Panel noted that oddly, guidelines from 2017 remain in use in 2024, in particular taking into account the impact GenAI may have on examinations and student assessment (see also the recommendation in paragraph 1.19).

- 4.3 Students are informed about ILOs and assessment standards through different platforms and modes. Communication with students is normally conducted through (1) course information sessions at the beginning of each term; (2) academic advising where Ug AAs regularly meet students to discuss their study trajectory and plans, or alternatively through the guidebook for RPg/TPg students; and (3) generic orientation sessions where students are informed about assessment standards and matters at programme and/or university levels. Students are well-informed about the assessment standards. The Audit Panel noted the emphasis on communicating assessment standards during meetings with LU teachers. While LU does not define an exact deadline for providing assessment feedback to students, students underlined the very fast response they receive from teachers after handing in assessments, papers, etc. Data from student surveys indicate a high level of satisfaction with how teachers assist students in their learning process. The online system facilitating feedback dialogue between students and teachers has also been reported to work well.
- 4.4 Since the previous UGC Audit, more diversity in examination forms and formats has been developed, and the Audit Panel found evidence of assessment practices currently accommodating a wide range of skills and competencies. The forms and formats include group projects, debates and case studies linked to industry or market needs. Students informed the Audit Panel that they are satisfied with the diversity of examination and assessment formats. New forms of examinations and assessments are clearly linked to ILOs and endorsed by PCC/DB for existing courses, and by AQAC/PSC with respect to new courses. The Centre of Practice is also used as an arena for assessment design and exploration.
- 4.5 Assessment practices related to maintaining academic standards in marking and moderation are clearly described in the AQAM. LU has designated entities (Ug Examination Board/Board of Examiners (BoE)/PSC) responsible for ensuring standards in Ug/TPg/RPg programmes. For LIFE programmes, examination committees also have responsibility for reviewing and approving results and grades.
- 4.6 The regular five-year programme reviews include benchmarking exercises that incorporate feedback from EAAs as well as comparisons with other institutions in Hong Kong and abroad. These benchmarking exercises focus on policies, practices, the appointments of examination panels, and procedures related to examination of student theses.
- 4.7 The University has been proactive with respect to adapting to and allowing GenAI for student learning, although not all current practices and guidelines have yet been transformed into more formal policies. Since September 2023, students have been permitted to use ChatGPT for preparing assignments, conditional upon a self-declaration in which students describe how GenAI has been applied in their work. During the pilot phase of GenAI usage, students are offered training on ways to apply GenAI in their learning process. TLC and other support

services are actively engaged in providing practical guidance on utilising this technology (see also paragraph 3.12).

- 4.8 Much emphasis is put on academic integrity and honesty of students, and all students are required to undertake an online tutorial on plagiarism awareness by a specified deadline. Students have also been offered a seminar series since spring 2023 on the ethical use of GenAI. In addition, LU uses a special software feature in Turnitin (AI Index) as a way to detect AI-generated text. Hence, there is a balance between equipping students with opportunities to acquire and internalise ethical standards and the responsibility LU has in ensuring academic dishonesty is detected and handled properly.
- 4.9 Students are provided with feedback on existing examination and assessment arrangements in a range of ways. Mid-term CTLE is mandatory and offers an opportunity for both students and academic staff to engage in a dialogue about assessment practices. The SSCC represents a more informal opportunity for academic staff and students to interact directly about assessment. Several non-mandatory means are also available for students, including LU's own EAS for Ug students. This system can be used by students to receive feedback on their own academic performance. Since 2023, LU has also been testing the software application 'FeedbackFruits', enabling digital feedback between students and between students and teachers. The range of formats available underscores LU's commitment to facilitating student learning through formative approaches to assessment.
- 4.10 Documented evidence demonstrates how LU emphasises continuous improvement in assessment practices in a number of programmes. The key elements in the improvement portfolio of instruments are mandatory SSCC interactions and the mid-term CTLE, which offers more real-time opportunities for adjustments during the academic semester. AAs and the EAS also enable follow-up of individual students and their needs. Examples provided indicate continuous improvement in how students value assessment methods. Meta-evaluations of existing data are regularly conducted by the TLC, ensuring that bodies and committees responsible for managing assessment approaches base their decisions on sound knowledge. LU has provided evidence that students' concerns regarding assessment practices are taken seriously by the University. The Audit Panel endorses the interest LU has shown in continuing to develop assessment forms and formats, as evidenced by a recent UGC-funded project which will explore the potential of GenAI technology in assessment.
- 4.11 By taking ILOs/PILOs/CILOs as points of departure and analysing how key academic ambitions can be translated into novel assessment practices, LU has created an approach to assessment that creates a stronger link between academic objectives and assessments that are of high relevance to working life. This focus on development has been combined with criterion-referenced assessment practices and is a very good example of how the University has taken onboard

recommendations from the previous audit (QAC 2016 Audit). While such criteria are easier to develop in traditional professional and disciplinary-based programmes, LU has also succeeded in developing strategies and formats for assessment in interdisciplinary studies to the satisfaction of students. The Audit Panel concluded that **the way LU currently develops and embraces diverse forms and formats for examination and assessment with students' feedback taken into account, is a feature of good practice.**

- 4.12 The Audit Panel noted the proactive way LU has embraced GenAI and the very proactive and nuanced way the University has tested out this technology in their assessment practices. The Audit Panel noted the dual emphasis taken by LU, where the individual responsibility of students and the ethical dimension of GenAI are combined with institutional arrangements for securing fair and transparent examinations and assessments. GenAI will undoubtedly transform existing assessment practices in higher education and, more importantly, the world of work. Hence, students need to be able to learn the opportunities and challenges posed by AI-related technologies if they are to be prepared for a changing labour market.
- 4.13 Whilst noting the proactive and positive response of LU, the Audit Panel would advise the University to be aware of the need to balance initiatives related to experimentation and piloting, as well as the institutional responsibility of formally updating assessment and evaluation policies and regulations. Regular reviews of assessment policies will be important to ensure consistency between experimentation and established regulations. The latter is not least important, as GenAI will continue to challenge examination and assessment practices in the years to come.
- 4.14 The Audit Panel concluded that the University has a comprehensive system for ensuring fair assessment of student learning, and with necessary external reference points and benchmarking exercises to ensure academic standards. A range of policies and routines are in place for assessment of student learning, emphasising criterion-referenced assessment. Students are informed about ILOs and assessment standards through different platforms and modes. Documented evidence of continuous improvement in assessment practices across programmes was noted by the Audit Panel.

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

- 5.1 LU is committed to providing comprehensive and effective student support for students under the framework of its quality education. Close teacher-student relationships and ample opportunities for out-of-classroom learning are core elements and characteristics of LU's provision of student support and this is articulated with the achievement of GAs and linked to the core spirit of Liberal Arts Education.

- 5.2 Different academic and non-academic units collaborate to provide student support. Student support schemes and special programmes are developed to take account of the change in student profiles and societal challenges (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic). The effectiveness of the various schemes and activities is reviewed regularly by different units, using students' feedback and monitoring participation rates. Informal discussions and ad-hoc WGs are set up to tackle issues and concerns and make improvement plans. However, the Audit Panel was not able to find robust evidence that demonstrated a strategic approach to improvements in student support services; rather, the University has made improvements in a way that is reactive rather than proactive. Given the rapid changes in student profiles and needs, the Audit Panel suggests that the University considers how a more forward-looking approach to strategic planning for the provision of student support can be developed through the extant governance framework.
- 5.3 Orientation and induction activities are organised jointly by different units to enable students to understand their learning journey at LU. Participation in these activities is tracked and monitored. A collective approach is adopted to monitor students' progression, involving subject teachers, AAs, and BoEs. The EAS is used to enable staff and units to understand students' progression and difficulties with studies. The Audit Panel concluded that **the use of multiple sources of data in the EAS, enabling faculties/departments to alert relevant units and staff promptly about those students experiencing difficulties with their studies, results in the provision of support that is appropriate and timely and is a feature of good practice.**
- 5.4 Each Ug student is assigned an AA, and it is mandatory for the student and AA to meet once a semester. AAs are able to understand the difficulties faced by students through the EAS and the regular meetings held each semester. RPg students are mainly supported by their supervisors. The relatively small size of the student body fosters familiarity between students and teachers.
- 5.5 A wide range of activities is organised by different units (including GS, Office of Student Affairs (OSA), Office of Service-Learning, Faculties/Schools and Departments) to promote whole-person development of students. A few notable programmes, such as the Lingnan Entrepreneurship Initiative and Learning Enhancement Activity Plan (LEAP) are aligned with GAs and receive high participation rates and positive feedback from students. Review mechanisms are in place for most of the schemes and programmes, and therefore continuous improvements are evident. LIFE offers the Life Enrichment and Appreciation Programme for students to promote their whole-person development.
- 5.6 LU invests great effort in promoting a global learning experience. Apart from outbound exchange programmes, other schemes and programmes are organised by different units to provide opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. These activities vary in terms of duration and places (Hong Kong, GBA/China,

or overseas). The Audit Panel also noted the special initiatives for Pg (TPg and RPg) students to promote their global learning. Funding is available for Pg students to engage in these activities, and evaluations have been positive.

- 5.7 LU is committed to creating a multicultural and multilingual campus. In response to the 2016 UGC Audit, LU has made an immense effort to enrich the cultural elements of activities and programmes organised by the Centre for English and Additional Languages and the Chinese Language Education and Assessment Centre and other units. Evaluations of these programmes and activities are positive. In addition to the programmes organised by the language centres and other units, the inbound exchange programme also promotes the multicultural learning of students. Under the administration of OSA, the Student-initiated Multi-Cultural and Multi-Lingual Enhancement Programmes Campus Fund encourages students with funding support to organise language learning and cultural exchange activities on campus. The Audit Panel also noted the wide range of activities offered to support the integration of non-local students.
- 5.8 In light of the emergence of GenAI, LU provides support for students to reinforce their understanding of academic honesty. All Pg and Ug students are required to complete an online tutorial, which is a progression requirement. The incidence of academic dishonesty at both Ug and Pg levels has remained steady at low levels across academic years.
- 5.9 Students are provided with support to enhance employability. They are connected with alumni and industry professionals early in their studies at LU. The OSA offers different types of training sessions, workshops, and support schemes to help students understand recent trends in the job market. Surveys are conducted to evaluate overall satisfaction with the services provided, and a high rating was received in 2022-23 academic year. Funding is available for graduates to enhance their professional skills to increase readiness for the job market. Starting in 2022-23 academic year, an online platform called TALENT has been in place to collect data and evaluate the quality of career-related activities and skill development of students. The Audit Panel noted the rising trend in employers' satisfaction with the overall performance of LU graduates.
- 5.10 There has been a significant increase of 142% in the number of SEN students and those requiring psychological services at LU from 2021-22 to 2023-24 academic years. LU has taken measures to strengthen the support provided to promote the well-being of students, with high overall satisfaction reported for these activities. A range of support services is also in place for students with SEN. The Audit Panel recognises the efforts made by the University but encourages senior management to establish a regular process of review with the intention of enhancing the support beyond participation and satisfaction rate, especially in terms of SEN support.

- 5.11 The Audit Panel saw evidence that students at different levels participated in the governance framework of the University. Student representatives are included in committees at university, faculty/school, department, and programme levels. Student feedback is obtained and considered in the review and enhancement processes across the University's student support provision.
- 5.12 Overall, the Panel concluded that LU has provided comprehensive and effective support for Ug and Pg students, and those from LIFE. The provision is clearly articulated to the GAs, and staff from different units and departments are clear about their roles and show high commitment to supporting students. Numerous opportunities in various forms are offered to promote students' personal growth, and students are supported in the transition from university life to employment. Student feedback on support provision is taken seriously, and improvement plans are devised on a regular basis.

6. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USAGE OF DATA

- 6.1 LU commenced strategic and widespread usage of data to inform decisions many years ago with the development of its Business Intelligence (BI) system in 2011. The University has made a strategic choice to ensure that the effective collection, analysis and usage of data becomes widespread and embedded in regular QA/QE processes since the development of the Strategic Plan 2022-28 and the appointment of the new President in July 2023. LU also strategically uses senior appointments, including recent appointments in Computational Intelligence and Machine Learning. The University's strategic shift is clearly stated in the current Strategic Plan, which emphasises 'Optimising Liberal Arts Education in the Digital Era', and is demonstrated by the establishment of a School of Data Science in 2024.
- 6.2 Essential data is collected and managed centrally, especially in relation to strategic planning, UGC annual submissions (e.g. CDCF reports), UAA, KPIs, QS rankings, etc., and the triennial planning exercise. This central coordination of data assists in its efficient management and enables appropriate access by authorised staff. LU has established important data access guidelines to mitigate the risks of data leakage, loss, theft, and destruction, and confirmed to the Audit Panel that there have been no major cybersecurity breaches. Policies on data protection were expanded in 2022 and again in 2024 with LU's Code of Practice for Handling Personal Data (2024). This Code of Practice is a valuable safeguard to regulate the handling of personal and confidential data. Data protection policies are strong and up-to-date, which is important as institutional data are key information assets that support the central mission of the University and could be vulnerable to cyber-attacks.
- 6.3 Data sets are used to instigate improvements for programmes, both annually and at five-year reviews, which follow a template using external advisors and benchmarking. Other evidence of effective integration of digital era technology

is found in the development of the University's TLDW, which is primarily designed for use by senior management and programme officers to inform strategic decisions regarding programme quality. The University has also adopted a leading approach to Artificial Intelligence, providing training for both staff and students, and offering a core course on GenAI for 2024-25 academic year.

- 6.4 The University has established sector-wide PMs and KPIs. Starting with just five KPIs in 2011, the expanded suite of data is now extensively used and benchmarked against leading liberal arts institutions, aligning with the UAA.
- 6.5 LU has developed a DRS that has expanded from data on admissions to now encompassing four DRS, available through the BI, for Ug, TPg, RPg and SD programmes. These DRS collect student data from application to graduation relevant to the programme level, including admission data, which is then combined with student learning data and CTLE results. The DRS has been built to integrate with Banner Enterprise Planning System, the Online Admission System, the CTLE System, and other internal systems to ensure data integrity and provide real-time data.
- 6.6 The Audit Panel attended an informative, practical demonstration of the DRS. An overview of the 2024 intake data was presented, including application statistics and acceptance rates for various programmes. LU uses this information to help devise admission strategies and improve applicant quality. Similarly, the dashboards can be used to interrogate student progression and completion rates. These registry statistics, such as access, progression and completion, are then combined with LU's array of survey data stored centrally. The TLDW houses extensive survey data, from e.g. students, employers, and alumni, as well as information from EAAs, providing a comprehensive picture of the health of the courses. Essential data for individual programmes is reviewed by committees within the QA/QE framework, such as the DB/PCC, and FB/BGS/SISMB. The Audit Panel heard that real-time access to the data is useful for administrative staff, and that the structured approach to data analysis is also useful for programme leaders in developing action plans for their APRs.
- 6.7 The DRS and TLDW have been upgraded in recent years, with transitions for TPg programmes in 2021, Ug programmes in 2022, and most recently, RPg programmes. LU reviews the process annually to assess the types of data to be collected and how they can best be used. The TLDW was externally reviewed and assessed drawing on UGC funding in 2021, with engagement of international experts. As a tool for analysing teaching and learning-related data, the TLDW was awarded a Bronze Medal at the 2023 Geneva International Exhibition of Inventions, providing external validation of its value to the University and potentially to the sector.

- 6.8 This programme level data is used as the basis for the annual performance review of programmes and for the mandatory five-year review (every four years for SD programmes). The APRs show strong use of this data-rich evidence, an example being an instance where an unfavourable comparison against the University average was flagged for attention, with clear evidence of follow-up. The APRs are required to address issues related to students who have withdrawn or failed to complete their studies. APRs follow a standard format for comparability, and the University provided significant evidence of effective follow-up. The meta-analysis of APRs provides a comprehensive view of the types of improvements initiated across the University and is also a means of dissemination of good practice.
- 6.9 Similarly, the five-year programme review is evidence-based, using an extensive range of data from surveys, external advice, and benchmarking. Surveys are used extensively to provide improvement, including the CTLE, which is used widely as a measure to improve teacher performance. The Audit Panel viewed a demonstration of the TLDW, which provided detailed information and comparisons for teacher and programme improvement. The Audit Panel was advised that the DRS, which serves as the data warehouse, is being developed for a more sophisticated analysis of teaching and learning data, providing more holistic evidence for improvement and adding more data, particularly related to research. Other areas of enhancement of the framework include dissemination to staff and translation into actions.
- 6.10 The data used includes advice from EAAs and members of ABs, whose comments are taken seriously and implemented, including for example, a more interdisciplinary approach to one programme, or relatively minor logistical improvements to examination processes in another. Benchmarking data is used for APRs and five-year reviews, with some external reviewers drawn from benchmark institutions, following up on a recommendation from a previous audit. The benchmarking is comprehensive, especially in relation to the five-year reviews. Benchmarking data is also used in the preparation of applications for membership in international bodies such as AACSB; this process of external accreditation has brought about improvements including the consolidation of Assurance of Learning Requirements.
- 6.11 There is some, but limited, evidence of the analysis and use of qualitative rather than quantitative data. The feedback from external advisers as noted above, is predominantly qualitative and informed by professional experience. Some surveys have scope for qualitative comments, which can be analysed and consolidated, for example students expressing concerns about the consistency of marking. The SSCC meetings consider such feedback and respond to it. The Audit Panel heard that the free-text responses, not just the scores, are taken very seriously, and that they are used in the appraisal of teacher performance and course performance. The data repositories are used to analyse teacher and programme performance, predominantly using CTLE results and peer reviews

often conducted by EAAs. LIFE predominantly uses CTLEs for teacher evaluation as their staff are essentially teaching-focused. It is recognised that some questions in the CTLE may be interpreted differently by different people, such as the term ‘use of technology’. Therefore, these questions are reviewed annually and tested through focus groups and SSCCs.

- 6.12 The University is also in the early stages of integrating behavioural data from Learning Analytics into its comprehensive use of data for improvement. The discussion of Learning Analytics in the SER essentially revolves around survey data, and there is limited evidence of widespread collection and use of data related to the digital learning environment, such as engagement and involvement with the virtual learning environment (Moodle). Senior staff expressed reservations about, for example, being able to assess the quality of discussion forums, but also emphasised the possibility of holding focus groups on particular topics, and the importance of close staff-student relationships. The analysis and use of behavioural data from Moodle are areas for continued development.
- 6.13 Survey data is also used to enhance the student experience and student support. An example of this is the evaluation of the LEAP initiative, which included a report and minutes at the BGS that recorded all the activities alongside quantitative and qualitative evaluations. Further examples include effective analysis of learning support for SEN students and career services.
- 6.14 The University has worked consistently and effectively to improve data gathering, analysis and usage across a broad range of topics for over a decade. It gathers and uses data from a rich variety of internal sources, external advice, and benchmarking partners to enable continuous improvement of its educational activities.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Audit Panel was able to establish that LU has a serious, clear and comprehensive approach to academic governance, the management of academic standards and the quality of the student experience. LU’s approach is one that emphasises a broad-based curriculum and is multi-faceted and focused on the education of the whole person in addition to academic excellence. The University’s educational approach is set within the context of its Strategic Plan 2022-28, and there is alignment between its stated Mission and Vision and the subsequent managerial and administrative implementation. At the strategic level, the framework for managing academic standards and quality is informed by a set of sector-wide PMs and KPIs. The strategic level of the framework is reviewed and improved regularly. The academic governance committee structure culminates in the Senate, which reports to the Council. Key committees of the Senate that provide oversight of QA and QE include AQAC and PSC. The President and Central Administration also oversee a range of committees that are responsible for corporate matters. The Audit Panel found that the hierarchy of

committees works effectively. While formal committees review their ToR annually, the Audit Panel suggests that the approach may also be extended to less formal committees. Major processes for managing academic standards and quality include regular five-year programme reviews and APRs. Other processes include the collection and analysis of a range of data from various internal and external stakeholders. The University takes this information seriously and uses it effectively. Policies, procedures, and guidelines used in the QA/QE framework are collated in manuals, particularly the AQAM for the University and the LIFE QA Manual. While there is evidence of periodic review of QA processes for continued enhancement, the review of policies and procedures is less evident, and there is no policy that specifies a time period between policy reviews. A regular schedule for policy and procedure reviews would complement the ongoing assessments of KPIs and PMs, ensuring that all elements of the framework for managing academic standards and quality are continually reviewed and enhanced.

- 7.2 The Audit Panel established that LU has a rigorous approach to programme development, approval, monitoring and review, and has comprehensive policies, procedures and processes to support the approach taken effectively. A multi-stage approach engages different committees at various stages, and this ensures that a system of checks and balances operates throughout the entire process. The portfolio of programmes is reviewed on a triennial basis, with Deans being charged with the responsibility for ensuring the reviews take place. New programmes have to be justified on the basis of the University's strategies, market needs, academic characteristics and societal demand. Curriculum development is informed by GAs and course content is specified in PILOs and CILOs. Mapping of GAs, PILOs and CILOs takes place to ensure strong links between the three. Final endorsement of curriculum content rests with the AQAC/PSC/Senate. Programme monitoring is data-driven and KPIs are used as key metrics for monitoring programme development over time. Programme monitoring incorporates external input through a system of EAAs and ABs. Key programme review elements are the APR and five-year programme review. Input from students is obtained via end of course and programme surveys, and more qualitatively through SSCCs. The Audit Panel observed evidence of improvement over time as a result of systematic work on quality. These improvements relate to both the quality assurance system itself and to individual programmes. LU also has a comprehensive system for monitoring and improving RPg programmes, which is well-aligned with international standards. As a university with a strong liberal arts tradition, LU works systematically with GAs and the development of PILOs/CILOs in collaboration with external input. The relationships it has established with external stakeholders effectively contribute to the continuous improvement of the academic portfolio.
- 7.3 LU demonstrates a commitment to reviewing and enhancing teaching and learning through a comprehensive, institutionalised, and evidence-based approach. The Audit Panel found that the University uses a range of evaluation

metrics, including student feedback questionnaires, focus group interviews, peer reviews, and learning analytics to inform teaching and learning quality. Key elements of LU's quality education include a broad-based curriculum, strong teacher-student relationships, a rich residential experience, extra-curricular learning activities, active community services, multi-faceted working experiences, a global alumni network and impact, and global learning experiences. LU employs a comprehensive range of tools to evaluate and enhance teaching and learning. The evaluation metrics include student feedback questionnaires, peer reviews, focus group interviews and learning analytics. The Audit Panel acknowledged the effectiveness and systematic approach of LU's use of both mid-term and term-end CTLE surveys as evaluation mechanisms. However, the Audit Panel found minimal reference to how the validity or reliability of CTLE survey questions is reviewed. The Audit Panel found that, since the implementation of the TLDW, there has been a more structured approach to using data in reporting processes, which enhances the review of teaching and learning. The TLC plays a crucial role in this commitment, supporting teaching quality through professional development and a strategic focus on four key areas: learning enhancement, learning design, learning innovation, and learning analytics. The TLC provides comprehensive resources, courses, and workshops for professional development, particularly in digital education, which aligns well with evolving faculty needs. LU has established clear guidelines for performance reviews at both professor and teaching track ranks, detailing evaluation criteria for teaching quality. A notable feature of LU's approach is its focus on blended learning. The University has revised its Blended-Learning Policies and Guidelines to incorporate lessons learned from the pandemic, reflecting a commitment to adapting teaching strategies to support digital education and remote learning, as well as embracing new trends in hybrid learning and AI-based tools like ChatGPT. The University is encouraged to formalise policies, particularly regarding the use of GenAI, to ensure a consistent approach is taken in teaching and assessment practices. The strong teacher-student relationship is highlighted by the Audit Panel as an example of quality education, as evidenced by high satisfaction scores derived from survey data.

- 7.4 The Audit Panel found a strong commitment to fair, transparent and effective assessment. A key feature in the approach to student learning assessment is how forms and formats of examination and assessment link to ILOs/PILOs/CILOs, ensuring alignment between the academic ambitions of various educational offerings and the skills and competencies that match these ambitions. A range of policies and processes have been developed by LU to guide assessment practices. Criterion-referenced assessment is in place for all courses offered, ensuring systematic outcome-based assessment designs throughout the University. Students are informed about ILOs and assessment standards through a variety of communication channels, including course information sessions, academic advising, generic orientation sessions and guidebooks. Students were well-informed about assessment standards and fully understood what was required of them. The Audit Panel positively noted the diverse range of assessment methods

in use which students welcomed. Feedback on assessed work is provided in a prompt manner. Assessment practices related to maintaining academic standards in marking and moderation are clearly described in the AQAM. Assessment is overseen by a range of committees and boards including the Ug Examination Board, PSC and BoE. The University has been proactive with respect to adapting to and allowing GenAI for student learning, although not all current practices and guidelines have yet been transformed into more formal policies. Much emphasis is placed on academic integrity and honesty of students, and all students are required to undertake an online tutorial on plagiarism awareness by a specified deadline. Students have also been offered a seminar series on the ethical use of GenAI since Spring 2023.

- 7.5 The Audit Panel found that LU is committed to the provision of comprehensive and effective support for students. Different academic and non-academic units collaborate to provide student support. Student support schemes and special programmes are developed to take account of the change in student profiles and societal challenges. The effectiveness of the various schemes and activities is reviewed regularly by different units using student feedback and monitoring participation rates. The Audit Panel noted that LU responds effectively to current student needs and the rapidly changing student profile; however the University could take a more forward-looking, strategic approach to planning for future needs. Orientation and induction activities are organised jointly by different units to enable students to understand their learning journey at LU. A collective approach is adopted to monitor student progression, involving subject teachers, AAs, and BoEs. The multiple sources of data used to inform the EAS enable the prompt notification of students experiencing difficulties. An AA is assigned to each Ug student with a semesterly meeting being mandatory. A wide range of activities are arranged for students with the aim of promoting whole-person development, including global learning experiences. LU is committed to creating a multicultural and multilingual campus. In response to the 2016 UGC Audit, LU has made immense efforts to enrich the cultural elements of activities and programmes organised by the two language centres and other units. Evaluations of these programmes and activities are positive. Support to enhance employability is in place including training, workshops and support schemes to help students understand the job market, which they appreciate. A significant increase in SEN students and those requiring psychological support has resulted in LU taking measures to strengthen the support provided for these students. Students engage in the governance of the University through membership of committees at university, faculty, department and programme levels. Student feedback on the quality of student support provision is taken seriously, and improvement plans are devised on a regular basis.
- 7.6 LU makes widespread use of data to inform decisions. The University has made a strategic choice to ensure that the effective collection, analysis and usage of data becomes widespread and embedded in QA and QE processes. Essential data is collected and managed centrally. This central coordination assists in its

efficient management and ensures appropriate access by authorised staff. Important data access guidelines are in place, and these mitigate the risk of data leakage, loss, theft and destruction. Recently, in 2024, policies on data handling have been expanded with the introduction of the Code of Practice for Handling Personal Data (2024). Data policies were found by the Audit Panel to be strong and up-to-date. LU has developed a DRS that has expanded from data on admissions to now encompass four DRSs, available on the BI for Ug, TPg, RPg and SD programmes. These DRSs collect student data from application to graduation relevant to the programme level, including admission data, which is then combined with student learning data and CTLE results. Registry statistics, such as access, progression and completion, are combined with LU's array of survey data stored centrally. The TLDW houses extensive survey data, e.g. from students, employers, and alumni, as well as information from EAAs to provide a comprehensive picture of the health of courses. The DRS and TLDW have been upgraded in recent years, with TPg programmes transitioning in 2021, Ug programmes in 2022, and RPg programmes most recently. As a tool for analysing teaching and learning-related data, the TLDW was awarded a Bronze Medal at the 2023 Geneva International Exhibition of Inventions. The APRs show strong use of data-rich evidence. The meta-analysis of APRs provides a comprehensive view of the types of improvements initiated across the University and is also a means of dissemination of good practice. Similarly, the five-year programme review is evidence-based, using an extensive range of data from surveys, external advice, and benchmarking. There is some but more limited evidence of the analysis and use of qualitative rather than quantitative data. The SSCC meetings consider such qualitative feedback and respond to it. The Audit Panel heard that the free-text responses, not just the scores, are taken very seriously, and that they are used in the appraisal of teacher performance as well as course performance. The University has worked consistently and effectively to improve data gathering, analysis and usage on a broad range of topics for over a decade, and gathers and uses data from a rich variety of internal sources and also from external advice and benchmarking partners to enable continuous improvement of its educational activities.

APPENDIX A: LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

[Information provided by the University]

History

Lingnan University (LU), a venerable institution in Hong Kong's academic landscape, has a rich heritage that dates back to its founding in Guangzhou in 1888 as the Christian College in China. Known in its earlier years as Lingnan Xuexiao and subsequently as Lingnan University, the institution flourished in higher education until classes ceased in 1952. It was re-established in Hong Kong in 1967 by alumni to continue the legacy. LU has progressed since 1991 from a post-secondary institute to a degree-conferring tertiary institution. In 1995, LU moved to a new campus in Tuen Mun, and in 1998, it was given self-accrediting status. In 1999, it was renamed Lingnan University.

In the 21st century, LU has continued to evolve and grow, with a current goal to become a comprehensive university in the digital era, with impactful research and innovations.

Vision and Mission

Vision

To excel as a leading Asian quality education university with international recognition, distinguished by outstanding teaching, learning, scholarship and community engagement.

Mission

LU is committed to

- providing quality whole-person education by combining the best of the Chinese and Western liberal arts traditions;
- nurturing students to achieve all-round excellence and imbuing them with its core values; and
- encouraging faculty and students to contribute to society through original research and knowledge transfer.

Role Statement

LU:

- (a) offers a range of programmes leading to the award of first degrees in Arts, Business and Social Sciences;
- (b) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;

- (c) offers a number of taught postgraduate programmes and research postgraduate programmes in selected fields within the subject areas of Arts, Business and Social Sciences;
- (d) provides a general education programme which seeks to offer all students a broad educational perspective, distinguished by the best liberal arts tradition from both East and West, and enables its students to act responsibly in the changing circumstances of this century;
- (e) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength, in particular in support of liberal arts programmes;
- (f) maintains strong links with the community;
- (g) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (h) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (i) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

Governance and Management

As the supreme governing body of the University, the Council of LU exercises the powers and duties of the University as specified in the LU Ordinance, and carries responsibility for ensuring the effective management of the University and for planning its future development. The Council has established 12 standing committees which are responsible for considering and advising the Council on matters under their purviews.

The Court is an advisory body of the University, consisting external and internal members.

As the supreme academic body of the University, the Senate is responsible for regulating and directing the academic work of the University. The President is the Chairman of the Senate and the Vice-President (Academics) cum Provost is the Deputy Chairman. Its membership includes, inter alia, the Vice-Presidents, Associate Vice-Presidents, Deans, Associate Deans, Chair Professors, Heads of Academic Departments and relevant units, academic staff and student representatives.

Academic Organisation and Programmes of Study

LU has six Faculties and Schools, namely the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Business, Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Graduate Studies, School of Interdisciplinary Studies and School of Data Science. These Faculties and Schools offer Undergraduate (Ug), Taught Postgraduate (TPg) and/or Research Postgraduate (RPg) programmes in the areas of Arts, Business, Social Sciences, and other disciplines. Established in May 2024, the School of Data Science pioneers a comprehensive data science education,

equipping graduates to meet the intricate analytics demands of the varied industries, fostering leaders and innovators who can guide Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area to a more data-informed future.

LU's broad curriculum covers an array of general education and interdisciplinary courses, providing Ug students with a firm knowledge foundation across different subjects. Notably, in the 2024-25 academic year, LU introduced a core course on Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) for all first-year students. This course covers fundamental concepts, basic techniques for generating text, images and audio, methods for evaluating and enhancing models, and ethical considerations. Through lectures and hands-on labs, students with no prior GenAI knowledge will gain practical skills in implementing, critiquing, and refining generative models.

Lingnan Institute of Further Education (LIFE) at LU also offers associate degree/diploma/higher diploma and other programmes as well as continuing education programmes that meet the needs of learners, industry and Hong Kong society at large.

Staff and Student Numbers

In the 2023-24 academic year, LU had 6 041 Ug and Pg students, including 3 594 Ug (with 3 015 UGC-funded students), and 2 447 TPg and RPg students, in addition to 2 392 students of LIFE (including sub-degree, diploma and short courses).

During the same period, LU (including LIFE) had 1 109 staff, including 318 academic/teaching staff and 791 administrative staff.

Revenue

Consolidated income for the 2023/24 financial year was HK\$1,590.4 million of which HK\$619 million (39%) came from government subvention and HK\$971.4 million (61%) from tuition, programmes, interest and investment income, donations, auxiliary services and other income.

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT FINDINGS

Lingnan University (LU) extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) and the Audit Panel for their thorough and insightful assessment during the Third Audit Cycle. LU has critically evaluated our academic governance, and quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE) frameworks throughout the audit process. We sincerely appreciate the constructive feedback, which aligns seamlessly with our steadfast commitment, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2022-28, to provide a world-class liberal arts education in the digital era.

The Audit Panel identified that LU has robust governance and quality management systems for managing academic standards and academic quality, which are aligned with our Vision and Mission (paragraph 1.3).

LU has a comprehensive set of policies and procedures for programme and curriculum development, approval, and programme and course monitoring with clearly defined review schedules (paragraph 2.1), which are data-driven. The key review mechanisms are the Annual Programme Report (APR) and the Five-year Programme Review, with our Senate mandated the inclusion of data for analysis and continuous improvement (paragraphs 2.6 and 2.9). LU has implemented an additional meta-review since 2019-20 by a ‘Small Group’ to scrutinise APRs for taught postgraduate programmes, and the Registry for undergraduate programmes. The Audit Panel considered this initiative a feature of good practice (paragraph 2.10).

LU is fully committed to reviewing and improving teaching and learning through a comprehensive, data-driven, and institutionalised approach. The Audit Panel found that LU has deployed a range of evaluation metrics to both inform and improve quality. LU’s teaching and learning strategy articulates its commitment to quality education and is aligned with the overall LU’s strategic area of ‘Optimising Liberal Arts Education in the Digital Era’ (paragraph 3.1). The Audit Panel highlighted that our strong teacher-student relationship is an example of quality education and a feature of good practice at LU (paragraph 3.15).

LU has rigorously followed the recommendations from the 2016 QAC Audit to add diversity to our assessment. We have demonstrated a strong commitment to fair, transparent, and effective assessment of student learning, and used external academic, industry advisors, and benchmarking exercises to assess our academic standards rigorously. The Audit Panel acknowledged that the way LU currently develops and embraces diverse forms and formats for assessment with students’ feedback is a feature of good practice (paragraph 4.11). We are especially proud of the Panel’s recognition of our equitable and innovative assessment practices, enhanced through the integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (paragraphs 4.1 and 4.7).

LU is committed to providing comprehensive and effective student support. The Audit Panel identified evidence of effective out-of-classroom learning in alignment with Graduate Attributes, our robust student support systems, and proactive academic

support, including the Early Alert System, which was also recognised as a feature of good practice by the Audit Panel (paragraph 5.3).

The theme of this QAC Audit is the collection, analysis and usage of data. The Audit Panel noted widespread evidence of data analysis and application, such as the development of our Teaching and Learning Data Warehouse, which consolidates teaching and learning data to provide comprehensive insights for stakeholders. The Audit Panel commended our acceleration of strategic focus on digital innovation since the appointment of the new President, which is reflected in the current Strategic Plan. This strategic shift is exemplified by the establishment of the School of Data Science in 2024 (paragraph 6.1).

LU has taken every step in developing and recognising our distinctive educational approach, which prioritises holistic student development, nurtures strong teacher-student relationships, and fosters global engagement. This approach reflects our dedication to blending the finest elements of Chinese and Western liberal arts traditions, equipping our students to excel in an interconnected world. In response to the Audit Panel's recommendations and suggestions, LU is fully committed to implementing a comprehensive action plan across multiple areas, including a regular policy review recommendation. (paragraph 1.19). LU will take relevant actions to strengthen our qualitative feedback mechanism and learning analytics for a more comprehensive understanding of student experiences and learning outcomes (paragraph 2.17). In addition, LU will formulate a proactive student support plan aligned with our strategic planning process (paragraph 5.2).

LU remains resolute in preserving its institutional strengths while diligently acting on the Audit Panel's recommendations. This audit has reinforced our determination to provide an exceptional liberal arts education that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities in the digital era. Our progress will be rigorously monitored through our QA and QE framework, with regular updates submitted to relevant committees to ensure transparency and accountability.

Going forward, we are eager to strengthen our partnership with the QAC and other institutions to advance our quality assurance and share best practices. By embracing both the affirmations and opportunities for growth highlighted in this audit, LU is well-positioned to elevate its reputation as a leading liberal arts university in Asia and beyond. With our unique geographic proximity to mainland China, LU is committed to advancing our deep collaboration with institutions at the Greater Bay Area and contributing to Hong Kong's status as a premier international educational hub.

APPENDIX C: ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AA	Academic Advisor
AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AB	Advisory Board
APR	Annual Programme Review
AQAC	Academic Quality Assurance Committee for Undergraduate Programmes
AQAM	Academic Quality Assurance Manual
BGS	Board of Graduate Studies
BI	Business Intelligence
BoE	Board of Examiners
CAQA	Committee on Academic Quality Assurance of Sub-degree Programmes
CDCF	Common Data Collection Format
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
CTLE	Course Teaching and Learning Evaluation/Enhancement
DB	Department Boards
DRS	Data Repository System
EAA	External Academic Advisor
EAS	Early Alert System
FB	Faculty Board
GA	Graduate Attribute
GenAI/GAI	Generative Artificial Intelligence
GS	School of Graduate Studies
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LEAP	Learning Enhancement Activity Plan
LIFE	Lingnan Institute of Further Education
LU	Lingnan University
OBATL	Outcome-based Approaches to Teaching and Learning
OSA	Office of Student Affairs
PCC	Programme and Curriculum Committee
Pg	Postgraduate

PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
PM	Performance Measure
PQMC	Programme Quality and Management Committee
PSC	Postgraduate Studies Committee
QA	Quality Assurance
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
QE	Quality Enhancement
RPg	Research Postgraduate
SD	Sub-degree
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	School of Interdisciplinary Studies
SISMB	School of Interdisciplinary Studies Management Board
SSCC	Staff-Student Consultation Committee
TLC	Teaching and Learning Centre
TLDW	Teaching and Learning Data Warehouse
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPg	Taught Postgraduate
UAA	University Accountability Agreement
Ug	Undergraduate
UGC	University Grants Committee
WG	Working Group

APPENDIX D: LU AUDIT PANEL

The Audit Panel comprised the following:

Emeritus Professor Hilary WINCHESTER AM (Panel Chair)
Higher Education Consultant and
Former Provost, Central Queensland University

Dr Sean McMINN
Director, Center for Education Innovation, The Hong Kong University of Science and
Technology

Professor Bjørn STENSAKER
Vice Rector for Education, The University of Oslo

Professor Susanna YEUNG Siu Sze
Associate Vice President (Quality Assurance), The Education University of Hong Kong

Audit Coordinator

Mr Alan WEALE
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 June 2025)

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 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

Ex-officio Member

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

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