

Project Title : Standardizing Clinical Education Assessment of Chinese Medicine through the Internationalization of a Practicum Internship Program

Leading University : Hong Kong Baptist University

Participating UGC-funded University(ies) : The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The University of Hong Kong

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### **Summary of Proposal**

Higher education of Chinese medicine (CM) used to foster the learning of CM practitioners as general practice. However, time is not sufficient for students to be trained in-depth in specific specialties. Under the scheme of 3-3-4, CM education has been enhanced from a 5-year to a 6-year curriculum. In order to better utilize the additional learning hours, the curriculum of clinical internship will be redesigned to incorporate specialty training to enhance students' clinical competency through effective assessment.

The design of specialized clinical internship (SCI) program is going to complement with the shortfall of traditional internship. It is aimed to improve the internship program of CM by setting up systematic and effective assessment standards focusing on clinical skills and whole-person generic skills. The assessment standards will be developed and validated by the CM Schools in Hong Kong (HK) as well as by overseas CM universities.

There are four phases in this project: (1) development of a pilot SCI and setup the assessment; (2) refinement of SCI and its assessment; (3) full-scale SCI implementation and wider application of the standardized assessment; and (4) adoption of HK SCI and assessment model in overseas CM universities.

The assessments mainly include two areas, clinical skills and whole-person generic skills. Both parts will be assessed face-to-face and online. Regular communication

between students, instructors and teachers from the local universities throughout the program will be carried to fine-tune the assessment. Focus groups will be formed by HKBU, CUHK and HKU individually and jointly to revise and finalize the SCI program.

By completing the whole SCI program, CM students should be able to share their knowledge in a CM specialty and making ethical decisions. The impact of this project should be life-long professional self-development. As most of CM students may become clinical practitioners, this positive impact may be shown to their colleagues and then the larger CM community. Also, the CM assessment will facilitate the communication and standardization of CM specialties and clinical skills in Asia.

### **Summary of Final Report**

Started in the academic year 2016 – 2017, this 4-year project aimed to revise the traditional graduation internship into a programme that helped students build specialty and international exposure. The programme contained two main parts: mandatory Specialty Clinical Internship and selection-basis international exchange trips. Pilot study was conducted in 2018, results of which facilitated a fine-tune on student workloads. After the pilot, there were about 100 students sent to Mainland China for the specialty internship from the three universities each year. Two exchange trips to Taiwan and South Korea were held in 2018 and 2019. 31 students and four teachers visited China Medical University, Taiwan, while 30 students and six teachers went to Kyung Hee University in Korea. Apart from attending talks and seminars to exchange thoughts with local teachers and students, Hong Kong students also conducted SCI with Taiwanese and Korean clinical teachers at China Medical University Hospital and Korean Medicine Hospital respectively. Based on students' e-Portfolio and reflective essays, as well as teacher's feedback, the team found out that SCI helped students' learn in-depth comprehensive knowledge related to a specialty division rather than general medicine alone. It was also revealed and the SCI increased students' maturity as a Chinese Medicine doctor.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has caused severe interruption to the project, with all outbound activities suspended in 2020. In response, the project team came up with online internship lectures from Feb 2020 to July 2020 organized by the three universities and partnering hospitals in China. The lectures were offered to the final year students focusing on different specialty divisions to facilitate students' learning even in difficult times. An online symposium in June 2021 discussed the future

possibility and development of internship teaching during the pandemic. While the abrupt suspension of face-to-face internship had caused delay in implementing this project, the pandemic also provided the team with useful insights and more overseas collaborative virtual opportunities to strengthen the SCI for enhancing student learning experience.