

The University of Hong Kong

Executive Summary

The Teaching Development and Language Enhancement Grant (TDLEG) continues to serve as an important resource to help The University of Hong Kong (HKU) achieve its institutional goals under the “3+1 Is” strategic framework (viz. Internationalisation, Innovation and Interdisciplinarity, all converging on Impact). The TDLEG plays a key role in facilitating our endeavours in strategic areas such as e-learning, undergraduate research, interdisciplinarity, staff development, and language enhancement (LE).

In Internationalisation, the University has continually attracted some of the world’s best scholars and students. Our diverse bodies of staff and students provide a vibrant and multicultural learning environment, promoting internationalisation at home. In 2019-20 and 2020-21, 68% and 60% of our final-year undergraduate students had undertaken a significant learning experience outside Hong Kong¹ at some point during their studies. Although many global exchange activities were deferred or cancelled due to COVID-19 lockdowns, we continued to provide international exposures to our students through innovative means (*e.g.* virtual exchange). At programme level, international experts were involved in curriculum reviews to assure international benchmarking. While our physical teaching exchange under the Teaching Exchange Fellowship Scheme was affected, our teachers used innovative means to connect with and learn from their counterparts around the world excellent pedagogical practices and curriculum innovations. A number of projects under the Teaching Development Grant (TDG) Scheme explored internationalisation in teaching and learning (T&L), facilitating interactions of culturally-diverse students and enhancing understanding of global best practices. In recognition of our sustained accomplishment in internationalisation, the University was named by Times Higher Education as the world’s most international university both in 2021 and 2022.

In Innovation, the TDLEG continues to support the exploration and implementation of new pedagogical approaches and curriculum design. In response to a stronger reliance on online T&L caused by the pandemic, the University gave priority to the enhancement of its e-learning capacity. We invested in both hardware and software (*e.g.* Camtasia for the production of quality T&L videos), and provided resources to support individual

¹ Significant learning experience outside Hong Kong refers to a three-week learning experience, with at least two weeks outside Hong Kong.

teachers (*e.g.* the HKU E-learning Resource Hub). The Technology-Enriched Learning Initiative joined hands with academic staff to build a universal learning platform and developed a number of innovative scenario-based virtual learning applications. “Video Vox” (<https://vox.hku.hk>) is a novel interactive video and content management platform developed in-house, and its second phase was funded by the TDLEG for it to enhance existing functions and add new features. The Common Core (CC) Office built a one-stop resources page on digital tools for T&L, and engaged a consultant to render guidance and support to all CC teachers. At student level, undergraduates were offered opportunities to conduct research locally and beyond through the Undergraduate Research Fellowship Programme, and schemes organised by Faculties and the CC Office. The prestigious local and international awards the University receives from time to time attest to the acclamation of its pedagogical innovations (*e.g.* the University Grants Committee Teaching Awards, QS Reimagine Education Awards (the “Oscars” of Education)).

The University continues its endeavours to promote interdisciplinarity. Six new Bachelor of Arts and Sciences programmes, and six new interdisciplinary dual degrees and joint recruitment scheme in partnership with top-tier universities were launched. Two new interdisciplinary elective courses on data science and leadership development were offered to all undergraduate students to enhance their data knowledge and leadership skills. The Students-as-Partners theme is widely promoted on campus. Many of our TDG projects involved students taking different roles (*e.g.* co-investigators), and they contributed significantly to all stages of the projects. Moreover, students are strongly encouraged to initiate and lead their own projects to address societal needs, making a wider and lasting impact beyond the University.

High-quality LE courses and activities have continually been offered to support students’ academic studies and career development. To evaluate the effectiveness of our offerings, regular reviews, impact study, student feedback surveys and other quality assurance (QA) mechanisms were conducted to identify areas that we have done well, and gaps for further enhancement to address the comments from students, teachers, external examiners and other stakeholders. A rich variety of experiential language learning programmes and cultural workshops were offered to provide students with immersive cultural experience, enhancing their multicultural understanding and communication skills. Though most activities were conducted online, students valued the virtual cultural exposure and interactions.

Due to the pandemic, there was a massive shift to online delivery of courses and

activities. The University therefore places a high priority on the development and implementation of e-learning platforms and other technology-enabled initiatives to enable teachers to use innovative pedagogies and activities to enhance student engagement, and make language learning more interactive and stimulating. Blended learning courses and workshops, flipped classroom, mobile applications, and a series of online/onsite self-access support services were offered to enrich the student learning experience. The Communication-intensive Course initiative has benefited both students and teachers. The QA data proved that all the LE initiatives are highly effective and have a positive impact on T&L.

T&L advancement is underpinned by strong staff development that encourages exploration, identification and sharing of good practices. The University leverages the U.K. Professional Standards Framework led by Advance HE to deliver internationally benchmarked professional development programmes. The Advance HE Fellowship Scheme provides a strong base for identification and dissemination of good practices, and HKU is the only institution in this region to have gained accreditation. We also provide teachers and students with a variety of means to showcase their excellent work, including international conferences, workshops, forums and symposia, e-newsletters, social media platforms, and resource hubs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed not only challenges but also opportunities. T&L at HKU has emerged stronger, and has the potential to reach even greater heights. We will strive to ensure that the provision of our comprehensive education is of the highest international standard to prepare our graduates to be highly communicative and innovative, ethically and culturally aware, and fully capable of tackling the unfamiliar with confidence.