

**Processes Leading to Formation/
Upgrading of CityU, HKBU, LU, PolyU, HKSYU and OUHK**

City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University and Polytechnic University of Hong Kong

In early 1991, the then City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist College and Hong Kong Polytechnic applied separately for self-accrediting status and university title. The then University and Polytechnic Grants Committee (UPGC) agreed that the granting of university title to any of the existing non-university UPGC-funded institutions should follow –

- (a) acceptance by institutions of the principle and terms of a differentiation of roles; and
- (b) successful self-accreditation.

2. As regards (a), the UPGC's policy statement on "Higher Education in Hong Kong", which describes the roles of the seven institutions funded by the then UPGC, was promulgated in 1992 and accepted by all UPGC-funded institutions, including these three institutions and LC (please see below). With regard to (b), an Institutional Review for each of the three institutions was completed in April 1993 and all three institutions were granted self-accrediting status by the Governor-in-Council in July 1993. In mid-1994, the applications for university title from the three institutions were approved and the university titles were granted.

Lingnan University

3. The then Lingnan College (LC) was granted self-accrediting status in late 1998. The College wrote to Government in December 1998 formally to request a titular change from Lingnan College to Lingnan University. Subsequently, Government sought the UGC's advice on LC's proposal. The UGC considered the matter in early 1999, having regard to the following pre-conditions –

- (a) acceptance of the institution of the principle and terms of a differentiation of role among UGC-funded institutions;

- (b) acceptance and implementation of a common basis of funding as applied to other UGC-funded universities;
- (c) attainment of self-accrediting status.

4. Again, LC already had an agreed role with UGC. As regards (b) above, LC had been funded fully on par with other UGC-funded institutions, including the adoption of common (university) salary scale for academic and equivalent staff since 1992. UGC recommended the granting of university status and title to LC, as well as other changes to the organisational structure. The Government decided in June 1999 that LC should be granted university status and should adopt a new internal governance structure. LC was re-titled as LU with effect from July 1999 following the enactment of the Lingnan University Ordinance.

Hong Kong Shue Yan University

5. The Hong Kong Shue Yan College (HKSYC) was a privately-funded (*i.e.* not UGC-funded) higher education institution which offered a range of academic programmes leading to academic qualifications, including undergraduate degrees. When HKSYC made an application to Government for university status, the Government adopted the following three criteria in considering whether private post-secondary colleges may be upgraded to private universities[†] -

- (a) it has been authorized to award a range of degrees in different disciplines;
- (b) it has acquired self-accrediting status; and
- (c) it has set up sound internal governance and quality assurance structures.

6. The Government's evaluation of HKSYC on the above three criteria is summarized below –

- (a) Degree-awarding Power

Since the 2001/02 academic year, HKSYC has been offering a total of ten four-year honours degree programmes, all of which have been approved by the Chief Executive-in-Council as required under Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320). These programmes have all been accredited by the then Hong

[†] These criteria are as set out in the Legislative Council Brief dated 19 December 2006.

Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) (now known as the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)).

(b) Self-accrediting Status

HKSYC has invited HKCAA to determine whether it is ready for Programme Area Accreditation status in specific areas and at specific levels. A Programme Area Accreditation status is equivalent/similar to self-accrediting status, but is limited in scope, duration and subject to periodic review. Having regard to HKSYC's capability in self-monitoring the planning, delivery and review of courses to meet the stipulated quality outcome, HKCAA concluded that HKSYC has sufficient experience and expertise in offering programmes in the three different disciplines concerned and approved it for Programme Area Accreditation status in these disciplines. The Programme Area Accreditation status will be subject to external review at five-yearly intervals.

(c) Internal Governance and Quality Assurance Structure

HKCAA has undertaken an Institutional Review to assess whether HKSYC has the appropriate academic and institutional structures in place commensurate with the status of a university. The Panel of HKCAA was generally satisfied that HKSYC has the fundamental ability to meet the standards expected of a university, both in terms of internal governance and quality assurance process.

The Open University of Hong Kong

7. The Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong (OLI) was established in 1989, with the power to make academic awards. The OLI dedicated itself to making higher education available to all those aspiring to it regardless of previous qualification. It was primarily a distance-learning institution. The Government met its set up costs, but OLI was self-financing with regard to recurrent costs.

8. The then Governor-in-Council decided in October 1996 that OLI should assume the responsibility for accrediting its own degree courses, subject to periodic external institutional reviews by HKCAA. In February 1997, Governor-in-Council decided to change the title of OLI to OUHK.

In making this decision, the Government considered various factors, including OLI's self-accrediting status, the quality of its courses, and the research capacity of OLI in its field of expertise *etc.* In particular, the Government noted that the great majority of institutions offering degree level, distance learning courses around the world have university title.