

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: Lingnan University

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 21 - Economics and Finance

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 16

(1) Context

The unit aims to maximize the impacts of its research in the fields of economics and finance, by bridging academic research and policy research. It specifically seeks to generate impacts from the areas in which it has the greatest strengths: competition policy and education policy.

Competition policy research has had impact on the formulation and implementation of competition laws in Hong Kong and Mainland China, including (1) merger control regulation which it drafted and has been adopted by the Chinese anti-monopoly agency in reviewing over 3,000 mergers since 2011; (2) competition analysis for an investigation of a top-five high tech company in China; (3) market study and policy recommendations in relation to competition policy development in Hong Kong; and (4) knowledge transfer to competition lawyers and practitioners via conferences/workshops and media engagement. This has benefited competition law enforcers, competition lawyers and practitioners, trade associations and consumers.

Education policy research has two main streams: (1) to determine the effective e-learning tools for government and schools to improve education efficiency and combat education inequality; (2) to identify and promote good STEAM education models for schools. This has benefited government education bureaus (central and local, in both Hong Kong and Mainland China), primary/high school principals and teachers, and their students, particularly left-behind children in China and children from low-income families in Hong Kong.

For the first stream, the unit has implemented a series of projects in collaboration with education bureaus in 17 cities/counties covering over 300 schools and 50,000 students. Several of its innovative education practices have been introduced by schools, resulting in increased student test scores and reduced education inequality.

For the second stream, the unit has organized three workshops, together with the China National Institute of Education Sciences and Intel China, to promote STEAM education models, and co-organised STEAM Young Maker Competitions which have attracted hundreds of schools and thousands of students from China and other countries. It has attracted \$5 million in donations and established a Teacher Training Centre for STEM Education in Futian, Shenzhen in collaboration with the National STEM Education and Research Centre and Futian Education Bureau.

(2) Approach to impact

The unit uses its research centres and platforms to organize workshops, seminars and competitions as well as collaborative research projects with government agencies and schools to carry out knowledge transfer and generate research impact. It engages non-academic users in Hong Kong and Mainland China who fit its research strengths, drawing on experience in Canada, the US and the EU in organizing events that are suitable for and attractive to such users. It also informs and educates the public about new developments in competition policy and education research, with over 700 appearances in print and online media, thus attracting new users.

The unit provides support for activities of impact, funding travel and organizing conferences with departmental resources. It has raised over \$30m in donations to support impactful research initiatives and knowledge transfer activities. The unit makes use of university resources including the conference fund, knowledge transfer fund, and technical support for wider engagements.

Using its branded platform, the Centre for Competition Policy & Regulation, as a vehicle for engagement, the unit has had impact on competition policy in Hong Kong and the Mainland, including competition policy recommendations for the SAR government, economic analyses for high-profile anti-monopoly cases in China, and recommendations on the auto fuel market for the Hong Kong Competition Commission.

Its education research has been supported by three GRF grants and over HK\$8m in donations from various organizations, which has supported the unit's impact activities. For example, in 2017 Xiangdong Wei received HK\$2.4 million from the Tin Ka Ping Foundation to use his e-learning platform in a remote teaching project for rural schools in China. Over 100 schools are covered by the project, which informs the Education Bureau on the importance of Arts and Music education for rural elementary schools, subjects for which teachers are not currently provided.

(3) Strategy and plans

The unit will continue to build on its excellent track record in competition policy and education policy, strengthening and deepening its impact as follows:

Competition policy

Focus on issues specific to the local context: for example in Hong Kong the concerns of SMEs and potential anticompetitive conduct such as retail price maintenance, and in Mainland China the issues of abuse of intellectual property rights and mergers and acquisitions.

Work closely with its collaborators in North America, Europe, and Mainland China to take advantage of international collaboration in competition policy research, so as to broaden the knowledge and expertise base, enhance synergy, and maximize impact.

Maintain collaboration with competition enforcement agencies, including China's Anti-Monopoly Agency (the State Administration for Market Regulation, SAMR) and the Hong Kong Competition Commission (HKCC), with commissioned projects and professional deliverables.

Education policy

Engage with schools to provide training and interventions based on the unit's research, working with students and teachers on the teaching of non-cognitive skills and providing training in e-learning and online teaching resources.

Collaborate with local education bureaus in Mainland China to evaluate the effects of various forms of e-learning and to use e-learning programs to improve the efficiency of their education.

Collaborate with local education bureaus and commercial organizations to influence government education policy in order to benefit disadvantaged children, such as left-behind children in China and children from low income families in Hong Kong.

Organise knowledge transfer conferences/workshops for education administrators, school principals, teachers and researchers from Mainland China and Hong Kong to exchange ideas and share knowledge on e-Learning.

(4) Relationship to case studies

Case Study 1: "Promoting competition policy development and effective enforcement of competition laws in Hong Kong and Mainland China". This case study is based on a major, long-running program of research within the unit. The research team is actively involved in competition policy developments in Hong Kong and the Mainland. This case study exemplifies this approach and the impacts that have arisen from it.

Case Study 2: "Applying Innovative Education Practices to Combat Inequality in Education". This case study illustrates the effectiveness of the unit's field experimental approach, in combination with its collaboration with local schools and education bureaus, and commercial organizations such as Intel China, to maximize policy impact and technological support.