

## Research Assessment Exercise 2020

### Impact Overview Statement

**University:** The Education University of Hong Kong

**Unit of Assessment (UoA):** 25 Political science (incl. public policy & administration & international relations)

**Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA:** 17

#### **(1) Context**

*i. the main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries or audiences for the Unit's research* include the broad range of groups involved in and affected by policymaking, including policymakers, government agencies determining or delivering public policies and services (e.g. Mandatory Provident Fund Authority; health services); professional organisations contributing to or affected by policy decisions (e.g. pension companies, hospitals, medical practitioners); NGOs (e.g. Oxfam), global policy bodies (e.g. World Health Organisation, UNESCO), and media. Recipients and users of public services form another category of user-group. These include the elderly, youth, welfare recipients, the economically disadvantaged (e.g. children and elderly living in poverty), and general public, locally, in Mainland China, and internationally (e.g. those accessing health and pension services). Meanwhile, teachers, students and policy makers in education are the main user groups for research focused on citizenship and Liberal Studies education.

*ii. the main types of impact specifically relevant to the unit's research:* The Unit's research has wide reaching and significant impacts on 1. Public policy, services and practitioners; 2. Quality of life and welfare; 3. Healthcare and health; 4. The economy; and 5. Society and culture through impact on education, public awareness and attitudes. Research on citizenship and citizenship education (Chong, Hung and Lee) has educational impact, benefiting teachers and students, and policy bodies in education. Research on social policy and welfare (Chou, He, and K. Cheung) has impacts on public policy and services (e.g. pension and healthcare reform); societal impact through changing public perceptions (e.g. increased public awareness and understanding of poverty and marginalised groups such as the elderly poor through extensive media engagement), the economy (e.g. through retirement protection reform); and human well-being (through poverty alleviation, improved healthcare, and education).

#### **(2) Approach to impact**

The Unit's approach to impact aims to fulfil the University's strategic aim of serving local and international communities with needs-focused scholarship, knowledge transfer and community service, and its encouragement that academics engage in commissioned/contract projects, consultancies, professional development courses, local or international professional conferences, professional seminars and workshops as well as participating in social, community and cultural events. It involves:

1. *Ensuring the quality, rigour and relevance of research*, which underpins its reputation in the wider society. Research that aims to inform and shape public opinion and public policy goes hand in hand with KT and advocacy activities. Research quality is ensured by the university's robust support and monitoring services, through the Research and Development Office and Committee on Research and Development.

2. *Building strong networks* with other researchers, policymakers, major donors, local and international organisation (such as WHO, UNESCO, UNHCR, Oxfam), professional organisations, school leaders and teachers. It has done this by accepting invitations to participate in policy advisory committees (e.g. Cheung's chairmanship of the government's Task Force on Review of Self-Financing Post-secondary Education; Chou's membership of the Working Group of the Future Task Force of the Insurance Industry of the Hong Kong Insurance Authority); speaking on its research and its relevance to practice in policy fora and meetings, including at the Legislative Council, to the Commission on Poverty and MPF Authority (Chou, on pension reform); to the Asian Development Bank (Vyas, on governance); organising events for outreach to public policy practitioners, media and the general public (e.g. Cheung's Policy Dialogue Series; organising Social Sciences Week; Public Policy Summer School and Training Camp, held annually at EdUHK and attended in 2018 by 300

participants from mainland China and elsewhere); and drawing on our links with schools afforded by our key role in teacher education and delivering Professional Development Programmes to serving teachers. The return to APS of Cheung as Research Chair Professor in February 2018 will strengthen its networks and profile with policy practitioners and the public, as evidenced by his six public lectures reaching audiences of 500 in 2018/19.

3. The Unit has *tendered for research* that meets societal needs in public policy and education, such as Fong's commissioned research on public finance by the Society for Community Organization and Social Media Barometer Project for WYNG Foundation. Dr He was invited as consultant for two major international research projects in the European Union and Taiwan, on migration and transnational social protection in Europe, and comparative health system reforms in Chinese societies, respectively. Lee, S.Y. conducted commissioned research by Swire Educational Trust on language policy and regulation in China. Vyas has been consulted by the Asian Development Bank for a project on governance and capacity in Southeast Asia.

4. The Unit has sought *cross-disciplinary and international and local collaboration* to strengthen our research and impact. Most GRF/ECS/PPR grants held by colleagues in this Unit have co-investigators from overseas institutions.

5. It has *maximised knowledge transfer and public engagement* by participating in public events, and building links between research and teaching activities (at all levels) and engaging with the potential research beneficiaries, through sharing knowledge with individuals and groups of policymakers and Legislative Council committees; NGOs; policy agencies; and individuals.

6. Working with the departments' General Office teams and the University's Communications Office, it has implemented a *coherent communications and media strategy* across multiple platforms. In the review period it organised 19 press conferences to report key research outcomes and achieved extensive coverage in mainstream print and broadcast media. Academic staff wrote more than 200 media articles, and maximised use of social media and the internet.

7. It *monitors impact achieved*, to inform future research and adjust KT activities, for example by repeating public opinion surveys regularly, to test how opinion has changed.

This approach draws on University-wide resources of the KT unit in the Research and Development Office, the Communications Office for media engagement and monitoring, and the University's well-established local, national and international partnerships and networks, and events.]

### **(3) Strategy and plans**

[The Unit is strengthening its strategic planning for achieving impact. It will aim to increase impact and regional relevance by sharpening its focus on the changing policy context, notably China's strategic development of the Greater Bay Area and One Belt One Road initiatives, both involving Hong Kong, and an umbrella theme of smart cities. There will be a stronger focus on branding, reputation, and esteem, necessary to attract partners and societal interest in research outcomes. APS will work closely with veteran policy leader Anthony Cheung to extend its networks and influence through more policy dialogues, and conferences. Impact will also be extended through its international and regional collaborations with partner universities, including its summer training camps for research students, involving senior unit members.]

### **(4) Relationship to case studies**

[Prof Chou and Dr He's research were designed to inform, shape and shake public opinion and policy decisions in Hong Kong and, for He, in mainland China. The work resulted in positive impact in areas of public policy, healthcare, poverty alleviation, and the well-being of both general populations and targeted groups, in Chou's case the elderly poor, in He's case health-care recipients. Knowledge transfer and policy advocacy were built into the planning, through i. networking (with policy makers and agencies in Hong Kong and China, legislators, NGOs, professional bodies), ii. maximising public engagement (through participating in community events), iii. implementing a coherent media strategy, through press conferences, op-ed writing, outreach to media contacts, and social media activity. Dr He's research also reflects strong collaboration with international and mainland universities. Both collaborated with University of Hong Kong's Public Opinion Programme to explore public perceptions on key policy issues of health, retirement and poverty.]