

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: Lingnan University

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 25 - Political Science (incl. Public Policy & Administration & International Relations)

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 7

(1) Context

Research within the unit comprises two main streams: international relations and comparative politics/area studies, with an emphasis on policy analysis and problem solving. The unit aims to achieve impact on public policy, public discourse and improving public understanding. Knowledge transfer and engagement are conducted through the Centre for Asian Pacific Studies and the Public Governance Programme.

The Centre for Asian Pacific Studies emphasizes research on practical issues which are important to governments, businesses, and the public, and develops research networks for scholars and institutions specialized in the Asia-Pacific region. The Centre uses workshops, seminars and conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas between scholars, government officials, the business community and other stakeholders.

The Public Governance Programme (PGP) conducts research and knowledge transfer activities aimed at improving Hong Kong's governance. In the post-1997 context, this requires a new institutional framework that can accommodate the growth of locally-groomed responsive and responsible political leaders who are able to meet the rising demands of civic-minded citizens.

The main beneficiaries are the policy and diplomat communities in Hong Kong, as well as international business and media communities. These include government agencies in South Korea, Hong Kong and China, non-governmental think tanks, CEOs and senior management of public institutions and NGOs, and audiences of local, national and international media.

(2) Approach to impact

The unit's approach to research impact is characterized by facilitating engagement and knowledge transfer through conferences, collaborative and co-produced research, advisory roles and dialogue with governments, and media engagement. The unit supports impact via a sabbatical scheme for staff developing impact, and financial and administrative support for conferences and workshops. It also maintains, with the university, a directory of experts for use by the media.

Conferences

Prof. Zhang Baohui has transferred his academic insights on nuclear politics to policy practitioners through hosting conferences in 2017 and 2018 at the Conrad Hotel, Admiralty. Each conference had 60-70 attendees, drawn from Hong Kong's diplomats, international business, media and think tank communities. Foreign diplomats were the largest group. Participants also included officials from the South Korean Foreign Ministry and the Korean National Diplomatic Academy. The unit provided funds for these events (\$37,000 in 2017, \$20,000 in 2018).

Collaborative and co-produced research

Profs. Li Pang-kwong and Samson Yuen serve as country experts on Hong Kong in the Varieties of Democracy project, an international collaboration to build a database covering 177 countries from 1900 to 2017 which offers a new approach to conceptualizing and measuring democracy.

Li also participates in the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), a collaborative research program involving election teams from around the world. Li conducts a post-election survey after each Legislative Council Election, the data from which is deposited at the CSES.

The PGP has also been commissioned to conduct 65 opinion surveys in the assessment period for a range of organizations, enabling them to improve their services. For example, it has conducted the annual opinion survey for the Airport Authority Hong Kong for nearly 10 years, and has completed a large-scale project on tenant satisfaction for Hong Kong Housing Society.

Advisory roles and dialogue with governments

Prof. Li Pang-kwong has served as Associate Member (March 2013 - June 2017) of the Central Policy Unit of the HKSAR Government, providing advice to the top decision-makers of HKSARG. He is also a member of the National Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies, a think tank established by the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council.

Li has given invited presentations on Hong Kong governance to key governmental bodies, including a selection of the PRC's top decision-makers on Hong Kong affairs, the Hong Kong Basic Law Committee of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, and think tanks of the HKSAR and PRC governments.

Media engagement

Researchers frequently contribute to the media, informing and shaping public discourse through their expert commentary in over 500 appearances in local, national and international media. Highlights include Prof. Chung Chien-peng's commentary on South-east Asia politics, Belt and Road initiative and US-China relations, Prof. Zhang Baohui's commentary in international media on Chinese foreign policy, Sino-Russian relations, and Korean Peninsula security and Prof. Li Pang-kwong's commentary on Hong Kong politics and governance. Li also served as a guest host of a radio phone-in programme on RTHK and a live TV current affairs programme on NOW TV.

The PGP conducts election surveys in all of Hong Kong's major elections. Survey findings have been widely reported in the press, informing the public and helping shape public debate. In 2014-15, TVB commissioned the PGP to conduct a series of three opinion surveys on the 2017 CE Election Reform Package. The PGP conducted seven surveys on the 2016 Legislative Council Election, and three on the 2017 Chief Executive Election, one of them for NOW TV.

(3) Strategy and plans

Maximising the impact of its research and knowledge transfer activities will continue to be the unit's top priority in the years ahead. To enhance its existing strengths in fields of international relations and comparative politics, the unit will: -

- i. Ensure that all research proposals and knowledge transfer activities have an impact plan.
- ii. Establish a media and networking team to facilitate staff engagement with the media and to strengthen staff connections with government, policy practitioners, political parties, interest groups and NGOs. A web-based online platform will be developed to relate the unit's research findings to wider audiences, and to provide a forum for idea exchange and public debate.
- iii. Offer short training courses in areas of expertise such as elections and campaigns, and public opinion and polling, in partnership with other research centres in the university.
- iv. Increase its presence in local and international media on hot and critical issues. An impact and media co-ordinator will be recruited to build up the Department's outreach capacity.
- v. Conduct consultancy work and professional training to enhance public policy advising in the wider community

(4) Relationship to case studies

The case study exemplifies the unit's approach to impact by demonstrating research developed with and in support of local and international governance challenges, achieving policy impact through knowledge transfer and engagement activities. It further illustrates how the unit supports impactful research, in this case by providing funding for teaching relief for the PI.