

## **Research Assessment Exercise 2020**

### **Impact Overview Statement**

**University:** [The Education University of Hong Kong |  
**Unit of Assessment (UoA):** [27 Sociology & anthropology |  
**Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA:** [11 |

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

[A wide range of groups benefit from our research, which reaches teachers and students across the education system; public policymakers and practitioners in areas such as social welfare and health; NGOs delivering services to marginalised groups; international agencies that monitor social issues; ethnic minorities and underprivileged groups, women, and youth.

The *main types of impact* relevant to the Unit's research include 1. Impact on education, including policy, pedagogy and student learning; 2. Impact on public services; 3. Impact on quality of life and welfare; and 4. Impacts on society and culture.

*These relate to a range of our research activity.* For example: Sociological research by May Wong and Gregory Fairbrother related to citizenship education and Liberal Studies benefits schools, teachers, students and relevant policy bodies such as the Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority by improving the delivery of Liberal Studies and citizenship education, and informing policy decisions, and curriculum development, and public perceptions of these subject areas. Research by Stephen Chiu on students' identity and civic engagement has informed the delivery of well-structured citizenship education, which has longer term societal impact in Hong Kong.

Research by Clara To addressed difficulties encountered by remarried Chinese immigrant women in Hong Kong. This has informed NGOs such as New Arrival Women League, Society for Community Organization, Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres, and Hong Kong Women Workers' Association to implement improved services for this target group, such as, information referral for household maintenance, counselling services, and assistance with application for public services.

Research focused on ethnic minorities, such as Ho Wai-yip's work on Islamic groups, has had impact on society and culture by increasing understanding and changing perceptions of Islamic communities in Hong Kong, mainland China, and the Middle East, among the local Chinese and Christian populations; impact on education by helping teachers better meet the needs of the Muslim children and their parents; and impact on the well-being of Muslim minorities, such as Indonesian domestic helpers, by generating awareness among employers of their religious and social needs. Law's research has facilitated social integration by exploring better models for delivering social services to minority groups, thereby having impact on quality of life and welfare, and on society and culture. Lawrence Ho's research on public perceptions of the disciplinary services has had impact for the delivery of those public services by informing their approach to mediation of the tense police-public relationships.]

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

[Our approach to impact in the period of review has aimed 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 and 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:

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

Development Office (RDO) and Committee on Research and Development. The recruitment in 2017 of the globally leading sociologist and community leader Prof Stephen Chiu as Chair Professor has provided new academic leadership and esteem for the Unit.

*Building strong networks* with other researchers; policymakers; major donors; local and international NGOs (such as Hong Kong Confederation of Social Services, EDiversity and UNHCR); professional organisations (e.g. Liberal Studies Teachers' Association); school leaders and teachers, and religious groups (eg. Association of the Heads of Secondary Schools). We have done this by accepting invitations to participate in policy advisory committees (eg Chiu was appointed member of the Commission on Poverty, HKSAR Government since 2018; Ho, K.K is a member of the Advisory Boards of the Hong Kong Police Inspectors' Association and Hong Kong Fire Services Department Ambulancemen's Union. Researchers have sought opportunities to speak on their research and its relevance to practice at policy-led events (eg Chiu was invited by the Labour Department to speak to employers of foreign domestic helpers); organising our own events for students, academics, policymakers, media and the general public (eg Social Science Week); and drawing on our links with schools afforded by our role in teacher education.

We have *tendered for research* that meets societal needs. For example, Anita Chan (2016-17) was commissioned by the Women's Foundation to study gender differences in STEM subjects, and Stephen Chiu (2018-19) offered consultancy services to the Hong Kong Confederation of Social Services on multiple pathways for youth in Hong Kong.

*We maximise knowledge transfer and public engagement.* For example, we build links between research and our teaching activities (at all levels) and engage with the potential beneficiaries of our research, such as policymakers (through sharing knowledge with policymakers and Legislative Council committees); religious groups and asylum seekers.

We work with the university's Communications Office in implementing a *coherent communications and media strategy* across multiple platforms, including by organising press conferences to report key research outcomes; systematically translating academic research into media articles accessible to the general public; achieving extensive coverage in mainstream print and broadcast media; maximising use of social media and the internet. In the period of review, unit members have written at least 72 media articles in mainstream newspapers.

*We monitor impact achieved,* to inform future research and adjust KT activities, for example by repeating public opinion surveys annually, 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. |

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

[In the coming RAE period we will further develop the approach above, and take advantage of new initiatives, including i.) the appointment of a post-doctoral fellow to turn mainstream academic research into media coverage and commentary articles, and to develop a platform for sharing research outcomes with Liberal Studies teachers to enhance the delivery of the subject. ii.) SSC will share its expertise for the on-going system-wide review of Liberal Studies, to develop understanding and inform public opinion; and influence policy makers. |

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

[Ng's research on asylum seekers was designed to inform and shape public opinion and policy decisions related to this marginalised group. Knowledge Transfer and advocacy were built into the planning, through networking (with legislators; local and international NGOs and policy agencies such as including UNHCR); and asylum seekers); maximising public engagement; implementing a coherent media strategy, through press conferences, op-ed writing, outreach to media contacts, and social media activity; and reviewing outcomes through subsequent surveys. |