

Research Assessment Exercise 2020

Impact Overview Statement

University: The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 30 - Chinese Language and Literature

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 18

(1) Context

The Department of Chinese Language and Literature at CUHK strives to deliver demonstrable benefits to society through its research. The Department is strongly committed to knowledge exchange activity through advising the government on education policy and publishers on teaching materials, as well as holding activities in schools and engaging the wider public. It closely works with affiliated research centres, for example the Hong Kong Literature Research Centre on research and impact activities.

(2) Approach to impact

There are 3 areas of impact from our research during the assessed period:

(a) **on public policies of the local government**, e.g. advising on the Chinese language curriculum change of secondary senior forms and on the medium of instruction in Chinese language teaching.

(b) **on professional training and development in the sector of Chinese language and literature education**: advising on teaching material creation and textbook editing, incorporating education, heritage and creativity.

(c) **on the expansion of knowledge and cultural appreciation**: enriching the public's understanding of Hong Kong literature and ancient Chinese texts as well as Chinese language topics through accessible databases and open-for-all activities.

Our planned routes to impact in the research groups are structured around 4 audiences:

(a) **Government**: We achieved impact through providing expert advice to the Curriculum Development Council of the Education Bureau and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, and influence important decisions in Chinese language curriculum design, e.g., Bureau has introduced 12 compulsory ancient Chinese texts since 2018.

(b) **Schools**: We interacted with local schools, teachers, adult learners as well as adult learning teachers through public talks advising on Chinese language curriculum design and promoting Hong Kong literature via themed walks and talks, which are open to 300k+ secondary students per year. Audiences without previous formal education about these topics are particularly benefited.

(c) **Event visitors**: The Department has been organizing inclusive events for as wide of an audience as possible, including members of the public who are interested in Chinese literature research and ancient text research. For instance, there are talks about Chinese ancient texts, literature, and linguistics held at public libraries, bookshops, Hong Kong Book Fair and secondary schools, as well as literary tours and writing workshops, impacting a 20k+ audience; a MOOC course impacts 22k learners. The audience was assumed to have no specialised knowledge on the topics and we endeavor to make connections to school education where possible.

(d) **Media readers**: The first type of media reports through which the Department interacted with the public is interviews of staff members on societal and cultural topics. Notable topics include explanation on Hong Kong literature, Chinese curriculum change, the use of Cantonese, and the medium of instruction in Chinese language etc. Staff have also been advisors and judges for public competitions which were featured in newspapers and TV (e.g. Chinese Poetry Writing Competition and "My Family Knows It All" quiz competition broadcasted to 7.3M+ people). The second type is to raise awareness about Chinese language and linguistics e.g. through various activities to promote

and introduce the similarities and differences among the varieties of Chinese spoken in the Greater China Region, and even in Euroasia. The third type is readers of books written via researching our Hong Kong Literature as well as Chinese ancient texts database and concordance series.

(3) **Strategy and plans**

We reach wide non-academic audiences and raise awareness for literature research and ancient text research through public lectures, seminars, exhibitions and mass media presence, such as newspaper articles and social media. We also develop the position of the Department as a hub for advice on all aspects of Chinese learning, language policy and planning. Moreover, regular top-level small group meetings of the head of department and principal investigators are held to (1) identify new means of improving impact, (2) evaluate the currently employed means of creating impact, (3) ensure that a big part of research activity is conducted in research areas with high impact potential. We aim to employ the following means in order to generate impact for the next six years, some of which had already been utilised successfully during the assessment period:

(a) **The mentoring scheme** for junior faculty members has been initiated and is in development, and “Researching for Impact” will be a key point of the mentoring.

(b) **Public engagement and knowledge transfer:** The Department will strengthen its social media strategy to reach new audiences. The Department is currently developing podcasts promoting Chinese ancient texts appreciation. Another example is that we enhance our social media presence, through which we advertise outreach activities and attract more diverse audiences. Currently, the website of the department has a detailed and searchable database showcasing all current and past events. A new Instagram account was set up in 2018 to disseminate news to the subscribers which helps advertise research content and allows readers to engage with the topics.

(c) **PhD topics** are suggested with impact in mind. We support PhD students with expertise, invest staff time and offer training in areas (e.g. promoting traditional Chinese culture, classical opera, modern values through texts, language teaching and learning etc.) which add to the impact.

(d) We shall **enhance further our liaison** with the organizations related to the promotion of cultural and arts education, such as libraries and museums, in the policy area. We encourage staff to serve on the Curriculum Development Council and provide advice.

(e) We aim to **acquire more funding and resources** to enhance impact, and prioritize on events which have a significant reach. The university has established the Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services in 2014 that provides researchers with a vast range of specialist services and funding to bring knowledge and visible benefits to the wider community, and researchers from the Department frequently make use of it.

(4) **Relationship to case studies**

Both case studies illustrate the impact approach in action. The case study 1 about The Hong Kong Literature Centre founded by Prof. Lo Wai Luen (Xiao Si). The centre has been a role model for promoting local literature to a wide audience through research projects and successful outreach events (e.g. literature walks on Hong Kong landscapes), creating enriching teaching materials for school students, and inspiring the creation of media programmes to be consumed by a non-specialist audience.

Likewise, a multitude of public events (e.g. lectures) were held as stated in the case study 2 about Chinese ancient texts to disseminate research among the general public. Also, there have been events about Chinese learning and teaching, during which the Department directly interacted with teachers and students through panel discussions. Besides this, the Department staff developed strong links to the Hong Kong SAR Government through advising curriculum design bodies, affecting the education of all Hong Kong Chinese language students, by advising how to include ancient texts into the curriculum. Lastly, mass media publications created on popular topics, such as Chinese zodiac signs, were based on research carried out in the Department.