

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: City University of Hong Kong

Unit of Assessment (UoA): History (34)

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

(1) Context – context for the individual case study(ies)

CityU History is located in the Department of Chinese and History (hereafter CAH) which was founded in July 2014. The Department offers quality curricula along three streams, namely, Chinese Language and Literature, History, and Cultural Heritage. Benefiting from the multidisciplinary context of the University, CityU History inherits outstanding research and human resources which existed in the University prior to the founding of the Department, and is developing its own character with the new members recruited since then.

CityU History's research covers a broad range of geographical areas and time periods, has impact in two broad categories; 1) *Global-Local Connections: Material Exchanges and Knowledge Transfers* (key beneficiaries of this strand include local and overseas museums and their visitors, and public audiences reached through mass media) ii) *Dialogues with Local Communities: Contextualizing Hong Kong History* (key beneficiaries of this strand include: public audiences reached through open lectures and mass media; secondary school teachers who participated in lectures co-organized by the department and the Hong Kong Education Bureau; and cadres of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR). These two strands are interconnected and will continue to characterize our research and impact strategy over the next ten years.

(2) Approach to impact

To align with the University's mission of "enlarging capacity for knowledge transfer", **CityU History** strategically promotes positive impact on cultural and education sectors of Hong Kong and neighboring cities. The unit's approach to impact includes the following:

Influencing Public Policy

Ching sits on a number of Hong Kong Government advisory bodies, notably the Antiquities Advisory Board, the Urban Renewal Fund, and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee. Her role is to translate academic knowledge of history and heritage to inform public policy. As a member of the History Sub-committee of the Museum Advisory Committee, she has held intensive discussions with the curators of the Hong Kong History Museum about the renewal of the permanent exhibition "Hong Kong Story". She and **Fan** have been commissioned by the Museum to conduct a research project entitled "Mapping Hong Kong in the Maritime World in the Ming and Qing Period" specifically for that purpose.

Media and Community Dissemination

Chan's monograph (*May-Fourth in Hong Kong*, Chung Hwa, 2014) was awarded the 2015 Hong Kong Book Prize. This award is co-organised by Radio Television Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Publishing Federation to promote quality reading and recognise outstanding Chinese books, with the winner chosen by a combination of expert panel and public vote. The book continues to attract a lot of media attention and spark public discussion. **Ching**'s participation in a Radio Television Hong Kong programme delivering short talks on the history of the Cantonese language and usages on a weekly basis between 2016 and 18, attracted a considerable amount of interest among the public audience. In the spring of 2018 she contributed to the television documentary series entitled "Empire of Silver" made by Matchlight Productions (UK) for international distribution via TV channels worldwide.

Delivering Lectures for Local Secondary School Teachers

CityU History members (**Hon, Chan, Ching, Fan**) delivered talks for local secondary school teachers at the lecture series jointly organized by CAH and the Education Bureau, Hong Kong SAR Government, from 2018 to 2019. The lectures were well received. The thank-you letter of the Bureau states that “the insightful sharing of the historical knowledge sure enhances teachers’ professional knowledge for further enriching their teaching in lessons for the benefits of students.” According to the survey conducted by the Bureau, the four lectures achieved high level of audience satisfaction.

Collaborative Projects with cultural institutions of neighboring cities

Examples include a joint research project directed by **Ching** on the Chinese Flags collection held at the National Maritime Museum (NMM), Greenwich (UK), which is supported by the Guangdong Museum of Revolutionary History (GMRH). A substantial visiting exhibition of flags and other objects from the NMM collection is planned to be held at GMRH in Guangzhou in 2022, and Ching will continue to serve as their advisor.

(3) Strategy and plans – strategy and plans for supporting impact

The University, in particular the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS), has provided substantive financial and institutional support to develop the unit’s strategy on impact. The launch of the “CityU Scholars” online hub enhances the research visibility of individual faculty members. The Knowledge Transfer reporting system keeps track of members’ KT and community engagement activities. At departmental level, external funding has been acquired through the process of collaboration with external institutions, notably those from the One Asia Foundation (HKD 741,600, for launching public talks), the Guangdong Museum of Revolutionary History (RMB 450,000, for conducting researches for visiting exhibition), and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKD 251,395, for conducting researches for renewing the long-term exhibition of Hong Kong History Museum).

For supporting impact, the major plans developed by the UoA are to consciously maintain close connections with various stakeholders. These stakeholders include: (1) Local and overseas museums, which we believe are one of the best agency for translating our research outputs to the public via exhibitions; (2) The Secondary Education Sector: We continue to work with the Education Bureau of HKSAR Government, as well as local history associations and societies, in delivering lectures to the public and in particular to secondary school students; (3) Potential employers from cultural and heritage industries: from time to time they are invited to appreciate students’ exhibitions and events; (4) External advisors recruited from different sectors: CAH executive committee holds biannual meetings with external advisors including representatives from the academics, the government, and cultural industries.

(4) Relationship to case studies – the relationship between the unit’s approach to impact and the submitted case studies

Entitled “Globalizing South China: Informing policy and increasing public knowledge about history and heritage”, the case study focuses on the works and impacts of **Ching**. Her personal academic interests fit well with the two research tracks along which the UoA has been developing its research orientations. Along the first track, namely, *Mapping Glocality: Cross-Cultural Material Exchanges and Knowledge Transfers*, the unit has already hosted a number of international conferences and delivered some edited volumes on coastal hubs and port cities. For the second track, namely, *Dialogues with Local Community: Contextualizing Hong Kong History*, the unit has numerous examples of its members’ considerable contributions to translating academic research into knowledge which may interest a wider local audience. The case study represents the best developed example of the unit’s broader impact activities. It shows how the research outcomes of more established members within a small UoA can be maximized to deliver integrated and effective impact. It also manifests how history and heritage, global and local perspectives, academic studies and public display can be blended together to showcase the characteristics of the UoA.