

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: The Chinese University of Hong Kong

UoA: 34 (History)

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 12

(1) Context – context for the individual case study

The Department of History has built up a reputation as providing the most balanced, diversified and comprehensive curriculum in Hong Kong, with strong strengths in public and comparative history. In addition to the establishment of the HKD10 million endowed centre, Leung Po Chuen Research Centre on Hong Kong History and Humanities (LPCRCHKHH) in 2011 led by HO Pui-yin, three other research centres - Centre for Chinese History, led by LAI Ming-chiu; Centre for Comparative and Public History (CCPH), led by David FAURE; and Centre for Comparative Study of Antiquity, led by POO Mu-chou, regularly organise international conferences, workshops, public lectures by renowned scholars, and collaborate projects with local and international institutions to reinforce the impacts of the Department. The Department's impacts can be classified into four aspects: 1) build up knowledge in history for all sectors of the community via the above research centres acting as civic think tanks on historical studies; 2) conduct collaborative activities in urban and comparative history studies, experience and values with the use of inter-disciplinary methodologies (by Ian MORLEY); 3) undertake regular academic activities to share research results with the community in public history (by CHEUNG Hiu-yu, HE Xi and PUK Wing-kin); 4) introduce heritage conservation and revitalisation consciousness to the Hong Kong community and enhance the application value of academic research in Hong Kong society (by CHEUNG Sui-wai and Poon Shuk-wah).

(2) Approach to impact – the unit's approach to impact during the assessment period for impact

The Department's research outcomes have combined academic pursuit with practical application to the HKSAR Government's policymaking and educate the general public, resulting in a new direction of historical approach for Hong Kong's sustainable future development.

1) Reinforce the Department's leading role as Hong Kong heritage conservation and revitalisation hub

To strengthen knowledge in appreciating historical monuments and sites, a series of heritage talks and walks for the public in different districts of Hong Kong have been regularly organised by CHEUNG Hiu-yu, CHEUNG Sui-wai, HO Pui-yin and POON Shuk-wah. They serve to propose a new heritage conservation framework for Hong Kong's sustainable future development and reinforce the Department's leading role in heritage conservation.

2) Collaborate research projects to enhance history knowledge exchange

Research projects of HO Pui-yin, LAI Ming-chiu and PUK Wing-kin with HKSAR Government departments (including Water Supplies, Civil Engineering and Development, Hong Kong Observatory, RTHK, Highways, Housing, and Planning) and the Education Bureau obtained grants in excess of HKD7 million. Research grants received by HO Pui-yin, LAI Ming-chiu and YIP Hon-ming from charitable organisations such as the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, Shanghai Fraternity Association and Hong Kong Construction Association totalled over HKD6 million. Outputs of these research projects including books, public lectures and public exhibitions are crucial for educating and disseminating history knowledge to Hong Kong.

3) Impart historical knowledge to scholars, students and the general public

Public lectures such as "History and Business in China", "Ancient and Modern Forum" and "Talks Series of Centre for Comparative and Public History" have been presented by history professors to enhance knowledge dissemination and sharing.

4) Train young scholars to promote knowledge in history to all sectors of the community

Benefitting from annual financial support of over HKD100,000 by LPCRCHKHH since 2014 for the Department's impact strategy, students and researchers of the history programme are able to conduct research and undertake regular academic exchange activities with overseas and local institutions. Researchers and students share their experiences with teachers and students of secondary schools as well as the general public on History Day.

(3) Strategy and plans – strategy and plans to support impact

1) Shape and review the Government's heritage conservation policy

HO Pui-yin is a member of the Advisory Committee on Built Heritage Conservation, which advises the government on the conservation of built heritage; and the chairperson of the Council of Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, which seeks to preserve and conserve Hong Kong heritage of by organising activities and providing funding support to assist heritage related activities and research projects. POON Shuk-wah, a member of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee, advises the government on territory-wide surveys of ICH and measures to safeguard ICH.

2) External funding for oral history

Conduct oral history projects with different local organisations and build oral history archives on different social groups with CUHK's libraries and the Shanghai Fraternity Association to stimulate community's interest in history studies.

3) Nurture young scholars

History education is strengthened by LPCRCHKHH's scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate students to conduct historical research and receive academic training and CCPH's scholarships for MA students to further postgraduate studies in history.

4) Disseminate research to address social needs

A Facebook page, "puiyin takeonhk", has been created based on research findings to provide useful history knowledge and serves as an educational resource database for public use and establish linkages with the public. A free self-guided heritage trail mobile app "Take on Hong Kong" on historical sites and monuments has been developed, presenting historical materials, old photos, anecdotes and stories related to selected sites and monuments. The Department engages youngsters and secondary school teachers to explore Hong Kong's heritage.

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

HO Pui-yin's pioneering research work on Hong Kong's heritage has provided the Hong Kong community with a solid foundation to take Hong Kong to its next stage of conservation policymaking. Ian MORLEY's studies on late Victorian cities and Hong Kong have shed comparative insights on colonial history, while POON Shuk-wah's analyses of humans and animals have boosted Hong Kong citizens' awareness of Hong Kong's social and economic development. LAI Ming-chiu's and CHEUNG Hiu-yu's in-depth historical analyses on social and political history of ancient society have provided comprehensive information on Hong Kong's ancient social life. CHEUNG Sui-wai's research on Nga Tsin Wai Village have enhanced the Department's expertise on public history and impacted government's conservation policies. HO's heritage conservation work is extended to an international level. With financial and expertise support from the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong and Macau, an international conference that emphasises urban development history between Hong Kong and Paris as well as cultural tours in Hong Kong will be held in December 2019. Colleagues and students are involved actively in this case and will reinforce its strengths in the future. HO is the member of the Advisory Committee on Built Heritage Conservation and chairperson of Lord Wilson Heritage Trust until May 2020 and March 2021 respectively, continuing her long-standing contribution to the government's future policies on preservation and conversation of built heritage. Permanent preservation and conservation of Hong Kong's built heritage has to be synchronised with the HKSAR Government's overall economic development policy.