

**Research Assessment Exercise 2020**  
**Impact Overview Statement**

**University: Lingnan University**

**Unit of Assessment (UoA): 34 - History**

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

**(1) Context**

Research in the unit breaks down into the history of several specific regions and periods. Major research streams include: pre-modern and modern Chinese history, history of Hong Kong, modern British and European history, history of Russia and Central Asia, and American history. One focus of the unit's research is the highly-regarded Hong Kong and South China Historical Research Program (HKSCHRP) that specialises in local histories. The HKSCHRP pursues numerous research and knowledge transfer initiatives that aim to benefit the learning of students, the training of history teachers, civil servants, and the public throughout Hong Kong.

Some of the most important external audiences for this work are local civil servants and policy makers. Faculty members including Prof Lau Chi-Pang and Vincent Leung have worked closely with officials from the Education Bureau of Hong Kong, to advise on the reform of the secondary school curriculum. Based on their research on Chinese history, they advised the Ad Hoc Committee for the Implementation of Junior Secondary Chinese History and History Curricula (Secondary 1-3) on the design of the new Chinese history curriculum. The new curriculum is slated to launch in September 2020, and at that time, this will affect all students in secondary schools in Hong Kong.

The HKSCSRP has also worked with the Education Bureau to organise a number of study tours of historical sites in China for secondary school history and Chinese teachers, designed to increase their knowledge and teaching skills. This initiative builds on the expert knowledge of Chinese history of Prof Lau as well as those of the History Department faculty, some of whom including Prof Vincent Leung and Prof William Guanglin Liu, have participated, as well, and includes visit to historical sites such as Quanzhou, Suzhou, and Hangzhou. Hundreds of students have benefitted from these study tours organized by the unit. In their feedback, teachers found that these study tours have greatly enhanced their understanding of the history, and this elevated knowledge base will contribute to quality of their teaching at the secondary level. The general public also benefit from the unit's research. The HKSCSRP maintains a popular oral history archive. It builds on staff research on the history of Hong Kong and the South China region, and has drawn hundreds of visitors since it was established in 2007.

**(2) Approach to impact**

The unit's approach to interacting with non-academic users, beneficiaries and audiences is to encourage individual staff to identify and pursue opportunities, based on collaborations with cultural heritage bodies, governments, schools and local communities. More specifically, the department achieves its impact through the following few specific approaches.

***Reaching out and contributing to the local communities***

The department, through the work of Prof Lau Chi-Pang, has had great impact in elevating public appreciation of the history of Hong Kong. Based on his research, he prepared and delivered over 70 public talks from October 2013 to September 2019. In this way he directly presented the results and implications of his academic research to more than 3,000 students, teachers, civil servants, district councilors and other members of the public. The success of this approach is demonstrated by the popularity of an accompanying book series, which have sold more than 10,000 copies.

The department also achieves impact through its members contributing their expertise to cultural and educational institutions. Prof Lau is an official expert adviser for the Hong Kong Museum of History, and is chair of the Advisory Committee on Built Heritage. Prof Leung is a member of the Diploma of Secondary Education Examination Chinese History Subject Committee (香港中學文

憑考試中國歷史科科目委員會), of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, providing scholarly input for this university entrance exam for secondary school students.

#### ***Preserving historical information***

As part of this strategy of engagement, the HKSCHRP has conducted commissioned research on the preservation and organisation of historical information and data from various local communities and government bodies, including the Sai Kung District Office, Hong Kong Museum of History, Hong Kong Architectural Service Department, Hong Kong Fire Services Department, Hong Kong Post, and Hong Kong Marine Department. In addition, HKSCHRP is responsible for part of the Lai Chi Wo Project, a multi-year rural community development and revitalization programme in a traditional Hakka village. For the Jockey Club Hong Kong History Learning Programme, it has developed teaching and learning resources aimed for all primary and secondary school students and teachers in Hong Kong. Further impact in enhancing public understanding of Hong Kong history is achieved through the unit's sustained engagement with the local media, both in print and online. Researchers in the unit have contributed to over 300 articles, both in print and online, lending their expertise to issues of public interest ranging from local history to housing policy.

#### ***Supporting staff in approaching impact***

Manpower support is provided by the unit to enable academic staff to achieve impact from their research. Prof Lau has been able to maximise his contact time with the public and policy makers, for example, as the department has been coordinating relief teachers to help deliver his courses for several years.

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

The department will continue to focus its development of impact in two institutional settings: the affiliated research centre HKSCSRP and close collaborations with the Education Bureau of Hong Kong. Under the leadership of Prof Lau, HKSCSRP will continue the excellent work it has done in recent years, in both research and public outreach. It will, for examples, continue to build its Hong Kong Local Records Project, maintain and expand its media presence in both print and digital venues, and continue its various knowledge transfer initiatives for students, teachers, civil servants, and the general public in Hong Kong, with the anticipated impact of further disseminating awareness and appreciation for the history of Hong Kong throughout the city.

Prof Vincent Leung will continue his close collaboration with the Curriculum Development group of the Education Bureau to advise on what and how students should be taught about history and Chinese history. Since the summer of 2019, he has also started to advise the same group on the design and development of mobile applications on the study of Chinese history, sponsored by the Education Bureau, to be used in junior secondary school curriculum. His contribution to the curricular design and revision will have long-lasting impact on the way that junior secondary students in Hong Kong learn about the history of China in the years to come. As new head of department, Prof Leung plans collective discussions and individual consultations with research faculty to explore new areas of impact. Specifically, we look forward to working with new colleagues Prof Lei Zhang and Prof Chunmei Du. Both of them research the modern history of China, and has considerable potential in achieving impact on student learning and public education in this subject matter in the city of Hong Kong (and beyond in the broader South China region).

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

The history department has focused its impact through the work of the HKSCHRP, under the leadership of Prof Lau. This case study is a clear and powerful example of the unit's approach to enhancing the public understanding of Hong Kong history through working with local communities and government bodies. Other department staff have worked with Prof Lau to share his teaching and administrative duties, so as to allow him to dedicate the most of his time to research and impact. Together these proactive steps has allowed him to pursue the various impactful initiatives through his leadership of the HKSCHRP.