

## Research Assessment Exercise 2020 Impact Overview Statement

**University:** The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**Unit of Assessment (UoA):** 35 Area Studies and Cultural Studies

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

**(1) Context:** This UoA consists of two independent academic units: Department of Japanese Studies (JAS) and Unit of Cultural Studies (CS) in the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies.

JAS aims to excel in research and teaching about Japan from multidisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives. We have identified Japan-Hong Kong relations as a core research area in which colleagues have striven to investigate different aspects of Japan-Hong Kong bilateral. We are particularly strong at historical and anthropological studies of Japanese popular culture. Two out of six professors are cultural historians who have been actively conducting research projects and cultural activities related to Japan-Hong Kong popular culture. Two other professors are cultural anthropologists who have also contributed to our impact case study by offering courses and public lectures on Japanese popular culture and serving as an independent non-executive director at Japanese companies in Hong Kong respectively.

CS is one of the strongest research centers internationally in the field of Chinese cultural studies. Our research strengths reside in film and visual studies, gender and sexuality studies, creative industry, studies of community arts, and ecological studies. Other than paying attentions to the various Chinese cultures and societies, we are also expanding our research into East and Southeast Asian Studies, particularly in the interactions between Chinese cultures and other Asian cultures. At the same time, we are also committed in promoting the well-being local communities and different kinds of cultural industries, to ensure our society to respect the importance of arts and culture.

**(2) Approach to impact:** The UoA makes use of three main strategies to increase the social impact of our research.

1. *Institutional collaboration:* We encourage our professors to interact closely with government institutions and cultural industries in Hong Kong, Japan, and other Asian countries, serving as advisors, non-executive directors and commentators. We work closely with the Japan Foundation, the Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong, the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong, and other cultural and business communities in Hong Kong and Asia to facilitate research collaboration, knowledge transfer and social impact of our impact case study.
2. *Research funding and social media:* CS has set aside a special funding to promote the faculty members' works for non-academic audience by producing short and comprehensive videos. With the support of this funding a short video was already produced to explain Prof Chung's research for the layman, and it has been distributed widely on the internet through social media and youtube. CS also makes use of the funding to hire Research Assistant to and collect evidences of the impact of the cases, and we provide time-off to related faculties to attend workshops around the world. Websites have been set up to publicize our impact case activities and achievements to the general public: <https://cuhkjas2019.wixsite.com/rae2020>; <http://ccs.crs.cuhk.edu.hk/main/research-keywords/>
3. *Emphasize the social meanings of our research in the planning stage:* Our faculty members constantly remind ourselves that our works would lose our critical edge if detached from the people's actual social lives. So we have research committees to remind colleagues to factor in

social meanings when research proposals are still in the planning stage, and to encourage research that can initiate creative thinking in solving cultural and social problems. Instead of assigning one or two of our staff members to do impact cases separately, we encourage all our faculty members to consider social impact when planning their new research, in order to develop cases organically.

**(3) Strategy and plans:** The UoA has several promotional plans to strengthen our impact strategy.

**JAS** has established The Impact Case Enhancement Committee to formulate strategy and plans for promoting our impact case to the public and the cultural industry in Hong Kong. First, we have hired full-time research assistants to collect data and testimonials and organize activities. Second, our Research Center for Comparative Japanese Studies actively promotes Japan-China and Japan-Hong Kong comparative research projects. Third, we have launched a public lecture series on Japan-Hong Kong Cultural Exchange for scholars of Japanese popular culture and influencers in the cultural industry to share and exchange ideas. Fourth, we organize international conferences and workshops related to Japanese popular culture. For instance, on 11 May 2019, a one-day workshop on Japan- Hong Kong popular culture was held for scholars, artists, TV entertainers and music performers to share their views on Japan-Hong Kong interactions and collaborations in popular culture with one hundred Hong Kong secondary school students.

**CS** is currently developing a publication plan to produce popular books written by our faculty members to explain our research for non-academic communities. We plan to set aside workshop funding to invite relevant parties to come and develop our potential case studies. In addition to the continual attentions on Prof Chung's game studies research, we are also investigating the possibilities in developing case studies around Hong Kong's community arts (Prof B Lim), ecology and culture (Prof Wu), the social meanings of pornography (Prof Jacobs), as well as twentieth century Chinese visual arts (Prof Pang). Teachers are already including elements of social impact in their GRF and other research proposals, and some are discussing with museums and galleries for curating exhibitions.

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

The **JAS** case study "Enriching popular culture production and consumption in Hong Kong and Japan through interaction and collaboration" is a reflection of our ongoing efforts to have an impact on local and regional communities. Professors Benjamin Wai-ming Ng and Kinnia Shuk-ting Yau have been actively conducting research projects and cultural activities related to our impact case. The former is a cultural historian who has been investigating Japan-Hong Kong interactions and collaborations in comics, animated series, games, pop music, TV dramas and culinary culture, whereas the latter is a film expert who has written extensively on the role of Japanese directors, actors and photographers in the making of Hong Kong films. This impact case enhances our mission to promote the understanding of Japan from multidisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives.

In the last RAE exercise the works of **CS** are praised particularly for their contribution to the creative industries. Prof Chung's research continues this good tradition, and it is also exemplary of the social relevance and timeliness of the works of our staff. While e-sport is one of the fastest growing entertaining industries globally, there are clearly not enough research to help society to understand its values and to help the industries to develop healthily. The main non-academic beneficiaries and audiences of Prof Chung's research on Asia's game industry are the game industries in Asia and the policy makers in the fields of culture, labor, and commerce. This case also demonstrates the new direction of our Division in tracing cultural relations and interactions between the Chinese and East-Asian and Southeast-Asian cultures and societies.