

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: Hong Kong Baptist University

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 35 area studies (e.g. Japanese studies, European studies, etc.), cultural studies and other arts/humanities

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 13

(1) Context

The heterogeneous and interdisciplinary research agenda in Humanities and Creative Writing (HMW) brings together a broad range of cognate disciplines, including cultural studies, creative writing, ethnic studies, food studies, gender studies, literary studies, and media studies. Our research engages global issues, including national and international political struggles, ethical dilemmas, and environmental issues, whilst also being rooted in our local community. Given this real-world agenda, impact and knowledge acquisition and exchange are central to our research orientation. Identifiable impacts derive primarily from individual research. The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences for the Unit's research include:

Non-governmental agencies – our research influences visions and policies of various non-governmental organizations by providing them with new cultural understandings of ethnic identities (Erni) and of sexual identities (Kam, Chow); and achieves impact by transferring current concepts of human rights articulation (Erni). *Cultural and literary organizations* – our practice-led research contributes to writing workshops organized by literary groups to enhance their creative writing pedagogy (Shea), programming at literary festivals, and writing competitions judged by our researchers (Tse, Tong, Lo). *The general public who use our work for consciousness-raising and empowerment* – our research stimulates debate on possible forms of resistance to the market-oriented mainstream media system (Cheung), heightens awareness of the governmental practice of surveillance and threat to privacy (Chong), provokes consciousness of the political rights of ethnic minorities or marginalized populations (Lo, Tam, Erni) and expands public sensitivity to climate change (Lo). *Food organizations* – our practice-led research includes partnerships with different NGOs to achieve social impacts by reducing food waste, redistributing food to the needy and educating people to fully use roof-top spaces for urban farming (Tam, micro urban farming & turning waste into resources). *Secondary schools with their students taking part in our programs* – our practice-based research enhances experiential learning among secondary school students (Tam, Tse, Tong). *LGBT communities* – our research shapes the social consciousness of gay communities in Hong Kong and China, and inspires and empowers socially repressed groups (Kam, Chow).

We aim to achieve the following main types of impact on society: to enhance public awareness and debate about gender issues through public talks and knowledge transfer. The beneficiaries are the LGBT community empowered by our research outputs and the general public whose understanding of marginalized genders is significantly improved; to empower and offer intellectual resources to activists, practitioners and the general public about cultural and social movements and events; to enhance literary culture by collaborating with local artists and arts organizations; to reduce food waste and redistribute food resources to the needy; to improve environmental consciousness; to promote ethnic equality and mutual understanding.

(2) Approach to impact

Providing consultancy and organizing knowledge transfer events – staff members have regularly participated in an advisory and expert capacity in non-governmental organizations and forums, and acted as artists, advisors, adjudicators, and expert assessors for projects with reach beyond academia. Kam's research has supported LGBT campaigns and guided activists through research-grounded public advocacy, providing the evidence base to support effective activism. Chow has collaborated with pop music artists in raising socio-political awareness for artistic expressions and performances for the general

public. Tam has widely disseminated her research and has mobilized secondary schools and the wider community to utilize the unused spaces of schools and rooftops for micro urban farming. The public engagement of Tong, Tse, Wong, Shea and Lo in the capacity of artists, advisors, adjudicators, and speakers in collaboration with different arts and literary groups has significantly enhanced the cultural literacy of school children and community members.

Building community partnerships – our researchers strengthened relationships with partners in Hong Kong, facilitating communication between practitioners, activists, educators and audiences. Our work with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Hong Kong Public Libraries, House of Hong Kong Literature, Spicy Fish Culture Production, Hong Kong International Literary Festival, Horizon Theater and other literary organizations has changed visions and practices related to creative writing workshops, writing competitions, literary editing, and literary festivals in Hong Kong (Tong, Tse, Wong, Shea and Lo). Our socially-engaged research (Erni, Kam, Chow, Tam) embeds into social activism with partners ranging from LGBT groups (Pink Alliance, Nutong Xueshe), migrant worker organizations (Enrich HK), and women rights groups (Reel Women HK, Community Business) to cultural foundations (Renaissance Foundation HK). These public activities are supported at the departmental level through our staffing policies and review/promotion criteria, which take social impact into account. The use of institutional facilities has been channelled through departmental support, enabling participation in activities at which researchers and end-users meet.

(3) Strategy and plans

Our strategy is to embed impact and public engagement into our research activities with clearly spelt-out objectives in order to maximize the impact of each research project. Our departmental strategy to deliver impact is: to broaden and deepen our collaborations and links with practitioner organizations; to identify and cultivate new partners through further networking and collaborative projects; to build and enhance ongoing, dynamic relationships with beneficiaries into research projects; to enhance the visibility of our research outputs via social media; to learn and share best practices through discussions among our staff and forums with non-governmental organizations; to strengthen support for impact activities of staff members by strategically using our research funding to finance impact activities, and by establishing regular workshops in which experienced staff mentor junior and newer staff.

(4) Relationship to case studies

The practice-based research of Tong, Tse, Chow and Wong synergizes with our department's approach to impact and demonstrates how, through collaborations with local artists and arts organizations, the literary life and awareness of Hong Kong people and primary and secondary school students and community members in the region have been enhanced. Practice-led research impacts audiences, participants and practitioners in cultural literacy contexts outside of academia. We aim to maximize civic engagement with the public through our practices and events with the non-academic community, while promoting research that can illuminate Hong Kong's cultural uniqueness in relation to China and the international world. The practice-led research of Tong, Tse, Chow and Wong serves as pathways to build larger networks and utilizes local elements across Chinese cultural and literary resources to develop new perspectives in relation to the globe. This case study demonstrates the department's aspiration and achievements in deeply engaging the Chinese community while actively constituting an international profile to draw upon cross-cultural contexts for greater social impact.