

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: Hong Kong Baptist University |

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 40 physical education, sport, recreation & physical activities |

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 14 |

(1) Context

The Department of Sport and Physical Education (hereafter the Department), situated in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) has conducted rigorous research focusing on the theme of “Physical Activity and Wellbeing” in both Hong Kong and international contexts. Since 2014, the Department has produced over 130 publications and collaborated with an array of governmental, academic, non-profit, school, and community organizations. This has resulted in the dissemination of knowledge pertaining to a vast range of topics relating to the promotion of physical activity and well-being through sport, exercise and recreation.

Our work has significantly impacted academic, governmental, and industry professionals, as well as the wider community, in three notable ways. Firstly, the Department’s focus on sport for persons with disabilities (PWD) and the elderly has provided these sectors of society with greater access to sport on both a recreational and elite level. Our work in this field is exemplified by the Department’s role in developing and implementing a snowshoe training programme for intellectually disabled athletes. This has seen an increase in participation in the sport at an elite level and podium results at the Special Olympic Games. Furthermore, our innovative approach has directly influenced policy towards sport for PWD with its success referenced in the Chief Executive’s 2017 Policy Address.

The second area where the Department’s research has positively impacted the community is through the development of intervention programmes that have been implemented in pursuit of encouraging behavioural change. Such interventions include programmes that have assisted in preventing influenza amongst the elderly in Hong Kong, as well as promoting active transport in children and adolescents. These studies represent an interventionist approach, that we often apply to our research and highlights our Department’s focus on preventative measures.

Finally, the Department’s collaboration with the Dr. Stephen Hui Research Centre for Physical Recreation and Wellness (also situated at HKBU) has enhanced sport performance in (non-disabled) elite athletes. Using sport-science and innovative technology, the Department has worked alongside the Centre to assist elite sport teams, including the national Handball and Women’s soccer teams, to enhance their training programmes.

(2) Approach to impact

In pursuit of positively affecting “Physical Activity and Wellbeing” in Hong Kong and abroad, the Department’s research is characterized by three approaches: Consultation, Collaboration, and Dissemination. The Department has engaged in a number of projects where we have played an advisory and consultative role for non-academic organizations and beneficiaries. This approach has resulted in us establishing close working relationships with industry professionals and national sport associations including the Gymnastic Association of Hong Kong, Sports Commission and the Elite Sports Committee, Hong Kong, Physical Fitness Association of Hong Kong, Wofoo Leaders’ Network Professional Group Advisor, Working Group on Sports Facilities, Home Affairs Bureau, HKSAR, Football Task Force committee, Home Affairs Bureau, HKSAR. The Department approaches research in a collaborative manner, working alongside others to develop and implement programmes that are catered towards the needs and abilities of different sectors of society. By engaging stakeholders, we strive to maximize the impact and relevance of our research in order to develop new and innovative sports programmes. This includes a sitting light volleyball programme for PWD, a unified gymnastics programme for children with and without intellectual disabilities and a snowshoeing training programme for the intellectually disabled.

Having consulted and provided consultation to various organizations and beneficiaries, as well as collaborated with stakeholders to maximize the relevance of our research, the final characteristic that defines our approach to optimizing the impact to physical activity and well-being relates to the dissemination of our findings. The Department aims to disseminate knowledge in a manner that is accessible not only within academic and governmental contexts but also to the wider public. Research findings have therefore been disseminated through media interviews on sport related issues and policies as well as within academic journals and reports. Our staff proactively takes part in media programmes such as “Sidewalk Scientist” and television interviews to enhance people’s awareness of the benefits of physical activity, participation in sport, and sport performance. This has generated public debate on physical activity and health related issues. Knowledge is disseminated through training workshops that transfer knowledge to the public, coaches, and university students.

(3) Strategy and plans

In order to support and reinforce the impact our research has on the community we have implemented an array of strategies and plans. To accelerate research for example, we provide incentives to our staff when applying for funding schemes such as the Knowledge Transfer Partnership Seed Fund and Public Policy Research funding. We also foster knowledge exchange and have previously invited 14 international visiting scholars to the university for a period of 2 to 8 weeks to share their expertise. This has assisted the development of new strategies and approaches that are of benefit to both the Department as well as the wider community. Our strategies strive to extend collaborations with core stakeholders in relevant fields so that our research continues to be relevant and impact targeted sectors of the community such as the elderly, children, and people with disabilities. In order to provide infrastructural support to the Department, we also urged our staff to take advisory roles in related non-academic organizations and beneficiaries. This is exemplified through staff representations/chairperson in Grant Review Board, Health and Medical Research Fund, Curriculum Development Council on Physical Education, Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Subject Committees (Physical Education), Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Disease, Measurement & Evaluation Council, American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation, International Association of Sport and Play for Young Children, USA. |

(4) Relationship to case studies

The case study in the following section pertains to the development and implementation of a sand-shoeing training programme (in lieu of Hong Kong’s inability to accommodate Snow Shoeing) and provides an example of the Department’s engaging and innovative approach to impacting health and well-being. It emphasizes our Department’s commitment to consultation and collaboration and our approach towards disseminating knowledge through facilitating knowledge transfer programmes. Developed in collaboration with Special Olympics Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Sport Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, this programme has achieved great results in international sport event. This is seen through the number of medal’s won at the 2013 and 2017 Special Olympic Games in South Korea and Austria respectively; the way the programme has increased international exposure and participation in sport for people with disabilities; and its promotion of inclusive sport amongst those with and without intellectual disabilities internationally through these two mega sport events. Our subsequent consultancy work for Special Olympics Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Sport Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities further demonstrates our endeavor to engage stakeholders to maximize impact. This consultation work has facilitated legislative approaches towards supporting athletes with disabilities, evidenced by its citation in the Chief Executive’s 2017 Policy Address. Importantly, this consultation work also made “Sports Training Programme for Persons with Disabilities” launched in Leisure and Cultural Services Department in July 2019. |