

## Research Assessment Exercise 2020 Impact Overview Statement

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

**Unit of Assessment (UoA):** 41 |

**Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA:** 31 |

### (1) Context

Research and impact activities in UoA41 are carried out within academic departments (Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Administration and Policy, and Educational Psychology) and within eight research/impact centres for cross-disciplinary work. Research for this UoA aims to generate positive impact on the following key user groups: a) students and learners, b) teachers, practitioners, and education leaders, c) schools and communities, and d) policy makers. During this RAE period the unit has endeavoured to enhance staff awareness and support for impact locally, regionally and internationally.

The departments, research centres and groups have developed programmatic research studies to generate impact with extensive reach and significance targeting the aforementioned four key user groups. For instance, the Centre for Learning Sciences and Technologies (CLST) innovated studies using information technology (e.g. Virtual Reality, AI) to power-up learning and instruction on diverse subjects and curriculum themes (██████ students, ██████ teachers were impacted). Another example is the research and development work of the Hong Kong Centre for the Development of Educational Leadership (HKCDEL). School principals and managers were trained and mentored and a blueprint for leadership training (e.g. serving and assistant principalship) was adopted by the HK Educational Bureau. Additionally, the Centre for University and School Partnership (CUSP) conducted projects to improve teacher professional competencies, school performance, and community well-being (██████ students ██████ teachers were impacted). Finally, the EdData<sup>X</sup> Research Centre (EdData<sup>X</sup>) and the Hong Kong Centre for International Student Assessment (HKCISA) championed research aimed at making use of a large educational dataset to transform national and international educational practices and policies.

### (2) Approach to impact

The units in the UoA recognizes that the impact of educational innovations and interventions must reach multiple levels of users and beneficiaries (e.g. the four user groups mentioned in Section 1). In addition, impact should be achieved through rigorous research where an evidence-based approach is used to measure and track the impact. The following approaches were used to promote impact during the assessment period and will be further developed in the coming years:

- a. *Impact training workshops* - These workshops aimed to bolster the understanding of research impact among academic and research staff as well as non-academic staff responsible for school partnership and development. For example, overseas consultants were invited to units in the UoA for an extended period from 2017 to 2019 to conduct extensive impact training and consultation with academic and non-academic staff (examples of topics are: “developing your impact case studies within CUHK Faculty of Education”, and “planning, delivering, and reporting impact”).
- b. *Good-practices sharing* - These events were organized for staff to share effective strategies and approaches to achieve the target impacts in a cross-departmental environment (e.g. during the 2019 Faculty retreat, and at regular meetings of the research centres).
- c. *Methodology workshops* - A number of research methodology workshops were organized to strengthen competencies on a variety of research methods for the assessment and evaluation of impact (e.g. evidence-based research, multi-level analysis).
- d. *Incentive mechanism* - Internal seed funding allocation is made available to projects with good potential for impact (e.g. CUHK Knowledge-Transfer Fund, Faculty supportive funding for projects for hiring staff, purchasing equipment, and providing the matching fund required for external funding). Further, there is a mechanism for workload relief for staff working on promising projects (e.g., special relief or workload buyout). The staff appraisal system also recognizes staff

achievements in knowledge-transfer and impact development initiatives.

e. *Support for international impact* - The UoA supported projects with potential for international impact. For instance, since 2018 funding and logistic support has been provided to the RABI project for partnerships with NEC Japan and the University of [REDACTED]. Similar support was provided to the PISA assessment teams (collaboration with OECD) and Centre for University and School Partnership (partnership with Johns Hopkins University since 2017).

f. *Infrastructure support* - To ensure whether impactful research was conducted and effective evidence was gathered, we created a Research and Development Office at the Faculty, with an associate dean (research), a senior professor as the Impact Coordinator, and an Impact Panel to champion and oversee impact development. |

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

| In the next 3 to 5 years, the following strategies will be implemented:

a. *Impact development as one of the prime objectives and outcomes of funded or scaled projects* - New and continuing projects will be developed so that the heads of the academic and research units of the UoA have a clear pathway for generating impact (e.g. reach, significance).

b. *Funding support to scale-up promising projects* - Support will be given to promising projects (e.g., with a successful pilot, with regional impact) to expand or mainstream interventions (e.g., to reach additional layers of beneficiaries, achieve international impact).

c. *Strengthening of infrastructure and professional support* - The UoA is hiring an Impact Manager to strengthen the impact "arm" of the Research and Development Office. The units in the UoA will hire more post-doctoral and research associates to carry out the necessary research work to support impact development (e.g. with financial support from CUHK, Faculty, and research centres).

d. *Distinguished visiting professor scheme* - The units in the UoA have employed four distinguished visiting professors from prestigious universities (e.g. Prof. [REDACTED] University, Prof. [REDACTED] University; Prof. [REDACTED] University and Prof. [REDACTED] University) to support promising research impact teams over the next 2-3 years (with funding support from CUHK and Faculty, impact areas included instructional technologies, language education, social robots, and school improvement interventions). Additional slots will be considered if relevant impact projects are identified.

e. *Placing the UoA on the map for impact at the international level* - The UoA will connect high-potential projects with corresponding international centres of excellence to create opportunities for impact achievement at an international scale. |

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

| The units in this UoA seeks to empower future education leaders with the latest practices, to innovate tools and pedagogies to facilitate learning, and to transform education to meet challenges in a rapidly changing society; thus, bringing about significant impact locally to our aforementioned four key user groups. To fulfil these aspirations, we have formed strong partnerships with user groups, beneficiaries and international collaborators. The impact cases developed have been facilitated by the approach to impact employed by the UoA in the assessment period, including but not limited to impact training and consultation, good practice sharing and methodology enhancement, and incentives and support (e.g. workload relief, space, financial resources and logistic). Our selected impact case studies provide focus on: Educational leadership (Case1) and school improvement, the HKCDEL has contributed to the development of educational leadership and quality of school education in Hong Kong via structured professional leadership and school-based development programmes commissioned by Education Bureau and professional associations. PISA and educational assessment (Case2) have been developed in the HKCISA and the EdData<sup>X</sup> and facilitated global assessment and monitoring systems in Hong Kong, Chinese and Asia-Pacific regions benefitting users (students/parents/teachers/schools), policy, and developing the UNESCO's Network for Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia-Pacific Region (NEQMAP). Robot for Autism Behavioral Intervention (RABI) (Case3) has established a curriculum that promotes social and behavioral skills of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and is being adopted by special schools and non-governmental organizations in Hong Kong, Japan and Australia. |