

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Briefing Note

Summary of matters considered on 18 September 2008 by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning

Composition

1. The Committee reviewed its composition and noted that it would now consist of up to three (rather than all) Pro-Vice-Chancellors (to be nominated by the Vice-Chancellor) as ex-officio members. The Chairman of the University Extension Board and the Dean of the Graduate School have become ex-officio members, and subject to Senate approval the Director of University General Education will also become an ex-officio member of the Committee. The Centre for Learning Enhancement and Research (CLEAR) now has a second representative on the Committee.

Quality Assurance Council (QAC)

2. This was the first occasion the Committee has met since the QAC released its audit report on the University's teaching and learning quality. The Committee was pleased to see that the high quality of the student learning experience had been well recognized by the QAC Panel, and that the relatively small number of recommendations from the Panel for further improvement were focused mainly on operational processes and procedures.

3. Integral to the QAC audit process was the compilation by the University of an Institution Submission which included an Action Plan for the continuous enhancement of teaching and learning. The Committee considered an updated version of the Action Plan, revised in the light of the QAC audit report, specifically for the 2008-09 academic year of the priority areas to be implemented.

Programme Reviews

4. As the first cycle of programme reviews for undergraduate programmes was more than half-way completed, the Committee considered the way forward for the second cycle. It was agreed that reviews from the second cycle would be conducted in 4-year intervals to align with the reviews of the Visiting Committees and QAC cycle of audits. It was also agreed that the second cycle of reviews will be of a lighter touch, focusing, as it will, on the programme design for the new curriculum under the 3+3+4 academic reform. This compressed cycle will take place in 2011 and 2012, and the outcome will continue to inform recurrent funding. The third cycle will then commence in 2013-14 with the Visiting Committees taking the lead.

Course and Teaching Evaluation (CTE)

5. The Committee agreed to set up a CTE Expert Group to redesign the CTE in order to address the recommendations of the QAC Panel of making CTE more

encompassing and inclusive. The work involved will be fairly substantive, including statistical analysis and literature review. When developed, the new CTE could also apply to taught programmes at postgraduate and sub-degree levels.

Experiential Learning

6. The QAC audit has found that the University's experiential learning activities had much to be commended especially in qualitative terms, although the Panel would like to see a more systematic approach in recording and reporting such activities and undertaken in a more coordinating fashion for planning purposes. The Committee agreed to establish a formal system for recording all experiential learning activities available to undergraduate and postgraduate students, whilst acknowledging that these activities had to contribute to the learning outcomes if they were to be regarded as valid.

Sub-degree programmes

7. The Committee agreed that henceforth the quality assurance mechanisms for sub-degree programmes at QF Level 4 would come under the purview of the Committee. In this connection, the Committee's functions will complement those of the Senate in overseeing the University Extension Board.

8. The Committee also noted that an institutional review had been conducted by the Joint Quality Review Committee of HUCOM on the sub-degree programmes offered by the University. The review is not dissimilar to the one conducted by the QAC, and again the University's efforts in enhancing educational quality have been well-recognized by an external agency.

Academic integrity

9. Clarifications were sought from the Committee on the use of the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine (CUPIDE) following a missive issued to Departments in September 2008. It was made clear that CUPIDE was not so much about catching the plagiarists as protecting the vast majority of students who observe the proper code of conducts in their academic output. It was acknowledged that some assignments neither could nor should be scrutinized by CUPIDE and individual teachers had the discretion to exempt students from submission to CUPIDE. All exemptions will be documented by programmes and reported in the internal programme review exercise.

Workshop

10. The Committee looked ahead to the workshop to be held on 10 December 2008 to review progress and to share experiences of implementing OBA and 3+3+4 preparation. Members were invited to start collating ideas and concerns encountered thus far so that they could be addressed during the workshop.