

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Briefing Note

Summary of matters considered on 15 July 2011 by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning

Interim Report on the Quality Assurance of Self-financed Sub-degree Programmes

1. The interim report on the quality assurance of self-financed sub-degree programmes had been submitted to the Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC) in April 2011.

Ratings of Programmes Reviewed in 2010 and Proposal for Second Cycle of Programme Reviews

2. A total of five undergraduate programmes were reviewed in 2010, which marked the completion of the first cycle of undergraduate programme reviews from 2005 to 2010. A rating panel was formed to consider the performance of the five programmes and make recommendations on the grading for reporting to the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning (SCTL) and the Resource Allocation Committee (RAC). The SCTL endorsed the recommendations made by the rating panel on the five programmes reviewed in 2010.

3. The rating panel suggested streamlining the undergraduate programme review exercise in the next full cycle. The issue would be further discussed before the implementation of the second cycle of full reviews.

Summary Report of First-cycle Undergraduate Programme Reviews

4. As noted from the summary report of first-cycle undergraduate programme reviews conducted in 2005-2010, the quality of documentation and the teaching and learning performance of programmes had improved significantly across the board over the years since the implementation of the programme reviews in 2005. A total of seven programmes were ranked “Excellent” in teaching and learning, as evidenced from their review outcomes.

Programme Review of Taught Postgraduate Programmes

5. Of the current total of 138 taught postgraduate (TPg) programmes, 112 had been introduced in or before 2006-07 and thus should be reviewed no later than 2011-12. Since 2006-07, 50 TPg programmes had completed the reviews and relevant documents submitted to the Graduate School, 17 had been reviewed, with the relevant documents being considered by the Faculties concerned. The remaining 45 programmes were scheduled to be reviewed in 2011-12. Most of the documentations submitted for the programme reviews were clear, evidence-based and action-oriented, though improvement was needed in a few cases.

6. The SCTL would conduct review of selected TPg programmes after the completion of the first cycle of TPg programme review in 2011-12, which should mainly involve paper review of the same documents for the full review.

Review of the Advisory System for Students

7. A review of the advisory system for students had been conducted to address the need for a formal system to provide each and every student with advice and assistance throughout their studies at CUHK in a more systematic manner. The proposal aimed at standardizing the framework for academic advising. Faculties and departments could work out further details for implementation that fit their own needs.

8. A working group comprising the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), University Dean of Students and other relevant parties would be formed to work out a schedule of implementation of the entire scheme.

Use of Teaching Portfolio for Compilation of Teaching Files

9. The Administrative and Planning Committee (AAPC) approved the Procedures for Reviews of Academic Staff, which, amongst others, recommended that a teaching file should be included in the dossier submitted by the candidates for review. The teaching portfolio was one possible way of assembling such a teaching file, as one example of good practice to which colleagues may refer in constructing their own teaching files, if they so wished.

University's eLearning Platform

10. In preparation for the new 4-year curriculum and to address the recommendation to adopt one single University-wide supported eLearning platform, a comprehensive review was conducted which indicated that Blackboard+BEENET was rated higher than Moodle+NetSpot in different criteria. The Information Technology Services Centre (ITSC) would provide assistance for the migration of teaching materials from the existing eLearning platforms, including WebCT, Moodle and CUForum, to the Blackboard. ITSC would also provide training for teachers and students for the use of Blackboard. It was targeted that migration would be completed and Blackboard be launched for full production by August 2012. The Committee endorsed the proposal to adopt Blackboard as the single University-wide supported eLearning platform.

CUHK Teaching and Learning Action Plan

11. Nearly all items in the updated CUHK Teaching and Learning (T&L) Action Plan have been completed, and follow up work would be undertaken for the remaining items on data tracking and service teaching.

Revised Proposal on the New Mechanism for Calculation of Major GPA

12. The proposal on the new mechanism for calculation of Major GPA for degree honours classification, applicable to students admitted under the new undergraduate curriculum from 2012, had been discussed by SCTL, subsequently revised and then circulated to members for further consideration. While no further comments were received regarding the proposal to allow the assignment of weights to Major courses, diverse views were expressed by faculties regarding the proposed truncation of excess Major courses/units, and that other ways could be considered to benefit students in the calculation of Major GPA, such as the possibility for students to retake failed courses. The Committee agreed not to adopt the proposal on

truncation and a revised proposal would be taken forward by the Provost for consultation with Deans of Faculties before it was submitted to Senate.

Professional Development Module for RPg Supervision

13. Under the current regulations governing the eligibility of supervisors for Research Postgraduate (RPg) students, academic staff should normally have acquired a certain number of years of experience after PhD graduation so as to become eligible. Over the past years, it was felt that some fresh PhD graduates were considered qualified as RPg supervisors, and it was suggested that an additional and optional module for training supervisory skills could be included in the professional-development offerings made available to teachers at CUHK. The Graduate School would coordinate the arrangements for the offering of workshops or experience-sharing sessions. The Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR) would advertise and administer the module, and provide records of attendance if needed.

14. The Committee noted that the proposal would provide an alternate route to allow junior faculty members to accelerate the pace to become eligible as RPg supervisors, and endorsed the proposal in principle on the understanding that a more detailed proposal would be submitted to the Committee from the Executive Committee of the Graduate Council.