

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT FINDINGS

City University of Hong Kong (CityU) sincerely thanks the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Committee (UGC), the Audit Panel, the Audit Co-ordinator and UGC colleagues for their professionalism, thoughtfulness and effort in completing the audit exercise. CityU values the UGC's detailed assessment of its sub-degree operations and its quality enhancement initiatives.

The academic programmes offered by CityU span a wide spectrum, including sub-degree, bachelor, taught and research postgraduate level and professional doctorates, with the large majority at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Sub-degree operations account for a small share of the University's portfolio. The University is nevertheless committed to assuring sub-degree quality by adopting the same quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms as for degree level and above, as far as it is practicable. Consequently, CityU appreciates the Audit Panel's recognition of the considerable differences in the structure and organisation of its sub-degree providing units (SDPUs), their governance and paths forward. Noting the differences, the Audit Panel saw evidence that the sub-degree programmes at CityU are "fit for purpose and meeting the expectations of students, employers and other stakeholders" and confirmed "the University's overriding commitment to the needs of the Hong Kong economy, society and community" (para. 9.4).

CityU is pleased that the Audit Panel commended the University for the close working relationship the SDPUs developed with their various stakeholders, including External Academic Advisors / External Professional Advisors, employers, professional bodies and other stakeholders in the areas of external benchmarking, curriculum design, programme delivery and placement and internship opportunities (paras. 4.6, 7.4, 7.5, summary #1, 7 and 8). The recognition is particularly encouraging for the programme teams who made concerted efforts to engage industry and professional specialists in the design and delivery of their programmes. The teams established a network with employers for the provision of placement and internship opportunities and used employer feedback to develop a competency-based programme delivery approach that addresses the requirements of professional organisations. CityU concurs with the Audit Panel that "representation of industry and professional practitioners in programme design is a strength and assists the University to ensure graduates are fully prepared for employment" (para. 3.13).

CityU has striven to adopt a robust approach to quality assurance and enhancement, placing strong emphasis on improving teaching and learning. The University therefore welcomes the Audit Panel's confirmation that the procedures for the periodic review of programmes were well established across the three SDPUs and that they involved constructive input from external participants (summary #4). The Audit Panel also commended the University's approach to handling cases where the evaluation indicated that improvements could be made (para. 5.10).

An outcomes-based teaching and learning approach has been embedded into the academic infrastructure of all SDPUs in CityU for numerous years. The University is thus pleased that the Audit Panel found evidence of the link between intended learning outcomes and assessment requirements, with confirmation from staff, alumni and employers that learning outcomes were being achieved (para. 6.5); and that the Audit Panel acknowledged the University's widespread adoption of the outcomes-based teaching and learning approach. CityU appreciates the Audit Panel's recognition of the University's commitment to ensure improved use of data collection and analysis and further development of learning analytics (para. 8.6). Sharing the Audit Panel's view, CityU agrees that a more comprehensive and systematic approach will help to better inform the University of teaching and learning enhancement.

Quality assurance at CityU is overseen and monitored by the University's Quality Assurance Committee. The University welcomes the Audit Panel's recommendation that the roles of the Quality Assurance Committee and Office of Education Development and Gateway Education be strengthened and consolidated with respect to sub-degree operations. For instance, the University intends to review the oversight of programme monitoring (para. 3.10), plan professional development activities, enhance the sharing of experiences across SDPUs, and task the Office of Education Development and Gateway Education to raise participation rates for staff development programmes of SDPUs (para. 5.7).

CityU agrees that ensuring staff and student awareness concerning existing quality assurance arrangements is important. The University therefore appreciates the Audit Panel's recommendations to strengthen SDPU communications accordingly, such as for the Student Complaints Procedure. While the procedure is well established in all SDPUs, students need to be made more aware of it. At the same time, a review of treatment equity for students of different SDPUs will also be beneficial (para. 6.8). Similarly, the Community College of CityU (CCCU) needs to ensure that all staff are familiar with the assessment criteria and assessment rubrics for staff performance and the University's corresponding expectations, plus the impact of these expectations on remuneration (para. 5.13).

This quality audit came at a time when the CCCU was in the process of being transferred to the University of Wollongong. The audit has given CityU a meaningful opportunity to review its approach, policies, implementation and practices for the sub-degree operations amidst this transition. The Audit Panel's advice is a valuable contribution to the further enhancement of the sub-degree programmes that remain, for which CityU is grateful.