

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Governance of Courses not Taught by the Host Department

A Working Group on the Governance of Courses not Taught by the Host Department was formed in 2007 under the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning (SCTL) with the following objectives:

- To consider the benefits and challenges that arise from the system of service teaching that operates at CUHK
- To make specific recommendations about optimum governance arrangements for those service courses that are required as part of the major programme of the host department.

The Working Group believes that service teaching across departments and faculties has a number of advantages, including the following:

- Providing students with access to experts in the discipline area who have specialized in the area(s) they are teaching;
- providing students with opportunities to interact with students from other programmes;
- exposing students to a broad variety of teaching styles and learning activities; and
- ensuring optimal use of resources for teaching and learning.

The practice of well-organized service teaching thus is desirable and effort expended on ensuring that such courses run smoothly is in the interests of students. The Working Group focused on the needs of undergraduate programmes.

The following recommendations of the Working Group were approved by the SCTL:

- Clear lines of communication need to exist. A **designated liaison person** is needed from both the HP and the SD. It is suggested that the course coordinator in the SD should be one liaison person and the programme director/coordinator of the HP team should be the other liaison person. The role of the course coordinator in the SD is especially important when there are more than two teachers in the SD course as ensuring a coherent course is more challenging in these circumstances.
- Arrangements should be in **writing**. After initial discussions have taken place, the HP and SD need to formalize their expectations and mutual discussion. This could simply be a **detailed course outline** which is formally accepted by the HP as being a good representation of the learning experience the students will have. It should be noted that guidelines for writing a detailed course outline are available from CLEAR at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/clear/services/course_plan.htm

- After the course has been run the HP should receive **a clear assessment profile for all the HP students**. If the SD course is a basic skills course with assessment largely through formal tests and examinations, a grade result for each student may be sufficient. However, in other situations, the HP would find a more detailed breakdown of assessment results helpful. For example, the differential between a student's project result and her/his examination mark may be valuable diagnostic information. The detail of the assessment results to be provided by the SD to the HP should be agreed before the course begins. Suitable annotations on the course outline could be used. It is expected that the forthcoming Integrated Student Oriented System (ISOS) will make transactions of assessment information quite straightforward.
- The HP is entitled to receiving **course and teaching evaluation (CTE) feedback** that HP students have provided to the SD course. This may mean some slight alterations to the CTE forms used in that students will need to indicate what programme they are studying. Provided the number of students is more than, say, ten, this should not present any privacy challenges. With a small number of HP students, the HP may well find a focus-group discussion more useful. It is suggested that the HP receive full CTE data on their own students and the two 'overall' scores from the whole class.
- Should any difficulty emerge in service-teaching arrangements, a **senior member from each of the Faculty Office(s)** involved (Dean, Associate Dean (Education), Director of Undergraduate Studies, etc.) should **mediate** to reach a suitable resolution.

[Approved by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning at its Third Meeting (2007-08) held on 2 April 2008.]