

Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review: I. Undergraduate Programmes

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1. Background

1.1 The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) regards teaching and learning as a core function; the University places great importance on the culture embedded in the institution and its history, and also on explicit systems and procedures to assure and enhance the quality of the educational experience for students. The development of the system and procedures has gone through several stages as the University has grown in size and complexity, and the measured pace of changes has won acceptance and ownership among teachers and students. This document constitutes the current status of the University's evolving quality assurance framework for teaching and learning.

1.2 Principles

1.2.1 Among others, the following principles were used to guide the formulation of the framework:

- The importance of reflection upon the achievement of desired learning outcomes as a stimulus to curriculum refinement.
- The value of periodic peer review as a spur to self-reflection and the provision of wider insights.
- The importance of diagnostic feedback in providing evidence to inform the process of reflection.
- The appropriateness of taking an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning by focusing on student learning outcomes.
- The importance of achieving alignment between desired learning outcomes and the curriculum.
- The value of deriving principles of excellent teaching at CUHK from the principles and practices of those judged to be the best teachers at the University.
- The importance of developing a framework which is effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning, while minimizing bureaucracy and paperwork.
- These principles have been incorporated into a curriculum development model, shown in Figure 1. The model commences with student learning needs which are utilised to formulate desired learning outcomes. These lead to five elements of the curriculum which are incorporated into the integrated curriculum framework: desired learning outcomes, content, learning activities, assessment and feedback. These five elements are incorporated into procedures for programme development, programme review, course development and course review. Evaluation or feedback is central to the model as it informs reflection upon practice.

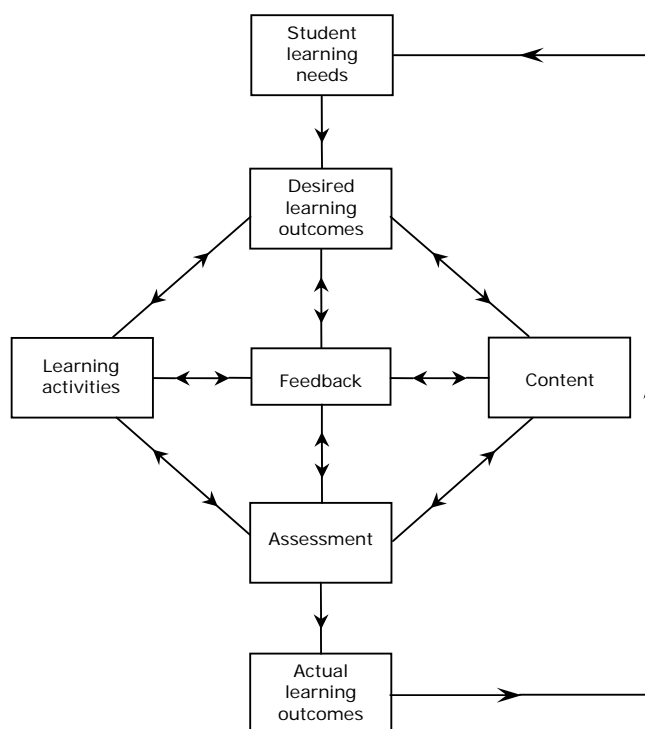


Figure 1. A model of an aligned curriculum

1.3 Nomenclature

- 1.3.1 In the following, the term *course* also means *module* (which is used in some disciplines); the term *department* includes *programme committee* and any other unit that might be responsible for academic programmes; the term *department chairman* includes *programme director*; and the term *teacher* includes *instructor* as well.
- 1.3.2 All guides and associated documents are to be used flexibly and adapted to suit practices and terminology within departments and faculties.

2. Main Elements

- 2.1 The integrated framework consists of the following main elements, described in detail in the following sections:
- The **planning** of courses and programmes should be documented in broad conformity with a standard template, at programme launch and upon major changes.
 - Each department together with the responsible teacher(s) should conduct and document its own (“internal”) **course reviews** at least once every three years, against the original course plan and, where appropriate, revised course plans should be formulated.
 - As part of its Annual Departmental Records submitted to the Vice-Chancellor, each department should provide a brief **annual progress report** on teaching and learning, focussing on progress with respect to the action plan.

- (d) Each department should conduct and document its own *programme self-evaluation* at least once every six years, against the original programme plan and, where appropriate, revised programme plans should be formulated.
- (e) The Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning appoints a panel, including the visiting/ external examiner, to conduct a *programme review* at least once every six years. The review panel considers the substance of the teaching and learning processes, and also monitors the effort and effectiveness of the self-evaluation.
- (f) A programme of *professional development* for teaching assistants and new teachers at the rank of Assistant Professor or below is mandatory in most cases.
- (g) *Incentives* are provided in two ways. (i) The findings of the programme review and the evaluation of the annual progress report informs the allocation to the departmental one-line budget. (ii) The contributions of individual staff to teaching development are recognized in personnel decisions.
- (h) The implementation of these tasks requires that decisions are taken on the basis of firm evidence; therefore diagnostic *instruments* are utilised at three levels: (i) for course evaluation, (ii) for monitoring student engagement in the entire programme, and (iii) for evaluating learning outcomes in the workplace after the students graduate.
- (i) The role of *visiting/ external examiners* has been revised to shift the emphasis from student assessment to teaching and learning, and to incorporate the examiner's inputs into the proposed periodic programme reviews.

3. Objectives, Philosophy and Coverage

3.1 Objective

- 3.1.1 The main objective of the present framework is to ensure that teachers and programmes engage in *reflection* about teaching and learning, that such reflection is rooted in *evidence* and leads to *action* for improvement, and that *incentives* are provided for such efforts.

3.2 Philosophy

- 3.2.1 Traditionally, curriculum planning and review, as well as the assurance of standards and quality, have focused on subject matter and its mastery, and on teaching, with an implicit emphasis on delivery of the course material in a lecture format. While CUHK has been doing extremely well in this regard, a principle aim of the present framework is to promote and sustain progress beyond this relatively narrow definition of the educational experience.
- 3.2.2 First of all, the focus should be equally, if not predominantly, on student learning and the attainment of desired learning outcomes. These encompass competencies, skills, values and attitudes developed, as well as subject-specific knowledge. Second, changes to curriculum and teaching strategies should be supported by diagnostic evidence.

3.3 Coherence and basis

3.3.1 Consistency is maintained by utilising the same five elements of curriculum design at the planning and review stages, both for an entire programme and for individual courses, namely:

- (a) learning outcomes
- (b) content
- (c) learning activities
- (d) assessment
- (e) feedback for evaluation.

3.3.2 These five elements of curriculum design and review and the associated instruments were derived from the principles of good teaching obtained from an analysis of the transcripts of interviews with 18 CUHK teachers awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Exemplary Teaching Awards. This work has been published as:

Kember, D., Ma, R. S. F., McNaught, C., & 18 excellent teachers (2006). *Excellent university teaching*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.

These principles are consistent with the extensive international literature in the area of excellent university teaching.

3.4 Coverage

3.4.1 The integrated framework applies on a mandatory basis to all undergraduate (Ug) major programmes. The School of Continuing Studies (SCS) has a related set of quality assurance procedures appropriate for the types of continuing education programmes offered. If, in the future, SCS programmes lead to CUHK degrees, then the integrated framework will apply as it does to other Ug programmes.

3.4.2 Taught postgraduate (TPg) programmes come under the Graduate School; so operate under a different set of regulations. They, therefore, follow a quality assurance framework which is somewhat different, but nevertheless was formulated from the same set of principles. Research postgraduate (RPg) programmes are fundamentally different, and are subject to other systems managed by the Graduate School.

3.4.3 General Education shares some attributes of major programmes, and has adopted a similar framework, based upon the same principles, suitably adapted to its circumstances. The courses are designed and offered by departments whereas the overall quality assurance is the responsibility of a separate committee (the Senate Committee on General Education and its Standing Committee) and office (the Office of University General Education). Therefore, while the philosophy is identical, a different set of procedures are appropriate and there are measures already in place. A brief summary is given in Attachment 1.

3.5 Documentation

3.5.1 Documentation is not an objective per se and is deliberately kept to a minimum. Such paperwork as may be required for the most part consists of existing documentation brought into a more uniform format, in order for the University to exercise a degree of scrutiny.

4. Course and Programme Planning

4.1 Frequency

- 4.1.1 A course/ programme planning document should be prepared whenever a new course/ programme is launched, or when there are major changes.

4.2 Format and content

- 4.2.1 Both the course planning and the programme planning should include a specification of (a) expected learning outcomes, (b) subject content, (c) intended distribution of learning activities, (d) the assessment scheme, and (e) intended channels to collect feedback for evaluation.
- 4.2.2 Suggested guides and templates are in Attachments 2 and 3. These provide guidance on the topics that might usefully be covered and the level of detail expected, but since they are only suggestions, they should be adapted to suit the circumstances of each discipline rather than followed rigidly.

4.3 Dissemination

- 4.3.1 These documents should be accessible by staff and students (in principle also to prospective students). It is recommended that they be posted on the departmental webpage.
- 4.3.2 The course planning document, with minor modifications, could become the course outline to be provided to students at the beginning of the teaching term.

4.4 Relationship with course and programme proposals

- 4.4.1 Extracts from these planning documents can also serve the purpose of submission to the Faculty Board and/or the Senate for approval of new courses or programmes (or to the Faculty Board in the case of major revision of courses or programmes). New write-ups should be avoided, both to ensure consistency and to minimize paperwork.

4.5 Procedures for introduction and revision of programmes

- 4.5.1 Attachment 3 includes a guide on procedures which should be observed when new programmes (major, minor or postgraduate) are introduced or revised.

4.6 Multi-section courses

- 4.6.1 For a course offered in multiple sections, a single course planning document should specify the overall framework and latitude (e.g., final examination covering 40%–50% of the assessment), within which each teacher can exercise discretion.

5. Course Reviews

5.1 Frequency

- 5.1.1 Each of the courses, including those offered for non-major students, should be reviewed by the teacher(s) concerned and the department (or the curriculum committee thereof) at least once every three years, or more frequently as necessary (e.g., when first launched or upon major changes).

5.2 Format and content

- 5.2.1 The course review, performed against the course planning document as the reference, should cover (a) learning outcomes, (b) subject content, (c) learning activities, (d) the assessment scheme, and (e) an action plan in the light of the reflection on (a)–(d), which in each case should be supported by relevant sources of feedback. In cases where the action calls for major changes, this initiates a new cycle of course planning.
- 5.2.2 A suggested guide is in Attachment 4. These are only suggested guidelines for course review, and should be adapted to suit the circumstances of each faculty.

5.3 Dissemination

- 5.3.1 The course review is an internal departmental document.

5.4 Multi-section courses

- 5.4.1 Either a single review is made for all sections, or individual reviews for each section should be supplemented by an overall report by the coordinator. In the latter case, any significant variations across sections should be reported, commented upon and where necessary justified.

6. Annual Progress Report

6.1 Frequency

- 6.1.1 Each department should engage in at least one session of annual review on all matters related to the programme(s) it offers. This can simply take the form of an item on the agenda of a Board meeting or departmental retreat to discuss and record issues, changes and improvements, but at least once every three years the review should be more substantial, and is subject to monitoring (see Section 6.2.2).

6.2 Format and content

- 6.2.1 Initial annual report

Departments not involved in the first round of reviews were required to submit their own action plan to the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning in 2004–05. The department was expected to identify strengths and aspects where attention was needed. The plans were expected to specify steps to be taken to address each of these aspects.

6.2.2 Full annual progress report

In the third year after a programme review the progress report should be a full report on action taken with respect to each part of the action plan. This report should contain evidence, from sources suggested in the guide for programme review, for all progress reported. An update of the action plan is provided in the light of the progress already achieved. This full annual progress report is monitored by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning and its views reported to the Resource Allocation Committee (RAC).

6.2.3 Brief annual progress report

In years 1, 2, 4 and 5 after the programme review, the report may be shorter (typically one page) and need not contain evidence for reported progress.

7. Programme Self-evaluation

7.1 Frequency

7.1.1 Each department should conduct self-evaluations of its programmes at least once every six years, ahead of the programme reviews (below). For new programmes or those experiencing rapid changes, self-evaluations should be conducted earlier, say immediately after a cohort has graduated.

7.2 Format and content

7.2.1 The self-evaluation, performed against the programme planning document as the reference, should cover (a) aims and desired learning outcomes, (b) subject content, (c) learning activities, (d) the assessment scheme, (e) the effectiveness of procedures for programme management and quality assurance, (f) procedures for the professional development of all teaching staff in curriculum design and teaching effectiveness, (g) in particular, the training and evaluation of teaching assistants, and the use of evaluation results to fine-tune the assignments of teaching assistants, (h) a summary of changes and improvements already decided and/or implemented since the last review (and as reported in the annual progress reports) and as responses to recommendations in the report of the visiting/ external examiner, and (i) an action plan in the light of the reflection on (a)–(h), in each case supported by relevant sources of feedback. If the action calls for major changes, a new cycle of programme planning should be initiated.

7.2.2 A suggested guide is in Attachment 5. These are only suggested guidelines for programme review, and should be adapted to suit the circumstances of each faculty.

7.3 Dissemination

7.3.1 The programme self-evaluation is an internal departmental document, but should form the basis for the formal programme review by the panel appointed by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning (see Section 8).

8. Flexibility in Implementation

- 8.1 The details of the internal review mechanism mentioned in sections 4 to 7 above are broad outline suggestions. Each faculty is encouraged to reflect and decide on such adaptations as may be appropriate for its particular circumstances and where necessary also for individual programmes (especially for professional programmes) within the faculty. However, significance differences from the direction of this framework should be reported to, and endorsed by, the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning.

9. Programme Reviews

9.1 Nature and frequency

- 9.1.1 Programme reviews involve parties external to the department, and are conducted only once every six years, keeping to a minimum the burden of being subject to external scrutiny.

9.2 Review panel

The review panel is appointed by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning in consultation with the faculty concerned. The panel should include the visiting/ external examiner of the programme, and at least one member of the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning. It is expected that expertise both in the subject and in pedagogy should be represented.

9.3 Selection of visiting/ external examiners

- 9.3.1 Visiting/ external examiners are nominated by departments for appointment by the Council on the recommendation of the Senate. Under normal circumstances the visiting/ external examiners are re-appointed for a second three-year term, so as to be consistent with the timetable for the review process.

- 9.3.2 Since visiting/ external examiners (whose terms of service coincide with the time for a programme review) are involved in the review process, departments should ensure that nominees are informed, interested in pedagogical issues, and willing to contribute to the programme review.

9.4 Review procedure

- 9.4.1 The department offering the programme conducts a self-evaluation (see Section 7) and produce related documentation and supporting evidence in accordance with the guidelines for programme review.

- 9.4.2 The documentation for the programme review should be the same as that for programme self-evaluation (see Section 7), augmented as appropriate. The programme review panel may seek additional information, e.g., in regard to courses specified by the panel. The review panel then meets with appropriate teaching staff of the department, and with students and alumni.

9.5 Reporting procedure

- 9.5.1 Following a review, the panel prepares findings and recommendations to which the department responds. The documentation produced by the panel and the department is forwarded to the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning.
- 9.5.2 One key component of the department's self-evaluation and response documentation should be a recommended *action plan* to deal with challenges and to improve the quality of teaching and learning within the programme.
- 9.5.3 Key elements of the review panel's report are:
- *judgement on the progress and improvements* made, especially in relation to goals set in previous action plans; and
 - *judgement on the quality of teaching and learning*, as well as the processes for their enhancement.

9.6 Action plan

- 9.6.1 The programme self-evaluation document requires departments to identify strengths and challenges within a programme. In addition the panel makes its own assessment of these and provides recommendations to departments. Identification of strengths provides useful information on best practice for other programmes. Identification of challenges should lead to an action plan for improvement. The action plan should be formulated by the department.
- 9.6.2 In subsequent reviews, the panel assesses the progress against the original action plan. Progress on action plans is monitored via progress reports by departments to the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning.

9.7 Judgement on progress and improvements

- 9.7.1 Judgements on progress and improvements are made on each element of the action plan. In addition, an overall evaluative comment is made, taking into account the relative importance of different elements.

9.8 Judgement on quality and processes

- 9.8.1 The panel makes a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in the programme by commenting on each of the following aspects: (a) learning outcomes, (b), content (c) learning activities, (d) assessment, and (e) the effectiveness of procedures for programme management and quality assurance.

9.9 Consideration by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning

- 9.9.1 The Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning considers the review panel's report, including its judgement on progress and on the quality in teaching and learning. The Senate Committee then makes final recommendations for RAC consideration. The Senate Committee may wish to review the relative weightings of the two components annually and make changes as circumstances evolve.
- 9.9.2 For multidisciplinary programmes offered by more than one department, the Panel may inform the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning of perceived divisions of responsibility for progress and overall quality.

9.9.3 RAC allocates up to 5% of the funding on the basis of these recommendations. Funding re-allocations are only applicable to programmes funded by block grant.

9.9.4 The progress reports submitted by each department in respect of each programme in the third year after the programme review should be more substantive, and are expected to contain evaluation evidence of learning outcomes. Each report is reviewed by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning, which in turn makes updated recommendations to RAC. It is expected that decisions made on the basis of progress reports before the first programme review (for those programmes that are not scheduled for review in the first few years) will not affect funding levels.

9.10 Dissemination

9.10.1 The programme review reports and the department’s response are made available to the department, the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning, RAC and the University administration.

9.11 Summary timetable

9.11.1 The following timetable shows the steps in a normal six-year review cycle.

year	review process	reports from department	visiting/ external examiner
1	programme review	programme self-evaluation	visit scheduled
2		brief annual progress report	
3		brief annual progress report	
4		full annual progress report	visit scheduled
5		brief annual progress report	
6		brief annual progress report	
1	programme review	programme self-evaluation	visit scheduled

9.11.2 Prior to the initial review, an action plan should be submitted in the first year of operation, with subsequent years following the reporting requirements in the table above.

10. Professional Development

10.1 A professional development course for new teaching staff and instructors, previously offered on a voluntary basis, is now compulsory for all new teaching staff at the level of Assistant Professor or below. Evidence of satisfactory completion is required for consideration of contract renewal, substantiation and promotion. New teachers in other ranks are also encouraged to take the course.

10.2 The course focuses on teaching methodology rather than the subject matter. It consists of four half-day sessions, and includes a group project in which each group demonstrates and teaches the rest of the class about a selected form of teaching and learning.

10.3 In recent years training of teaching assistants has moved towards courses tailored to the needs of individual departments. This strategy has proved successful and will be followed in future. Each department which makes significant use of postgraduate students as teaching assistants is required to support annual courses offered in conjunction with the Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR), for the benefit of new graduate assistants, tutors, instructors, senior instructors and others in teaching support roles.

10.4 Evidence of the provision of satisfactory training for teaching assistants should be included in the self-evaluation and review of the teaching and learning of each relevant department. The evidence should include an evaluation of the training provided.

11. Incentives

11.1 Incentives, at both the individual and the department level, are built in to promote attention to the matters contained in this integrated framework.

11.2 Department level

11.2.1 RAC has approved that starting from 2006–07, up to 5% of the total allocation to all teaching units will be distributed in a manner that is informed by the actual performance and the efforts at improvement in matters related to teaching and learning, as assessed through the programme reviews once every six years, and through the annual progress reports as assessed in other years.

11.3 Individual level

11.3.1 The course evaluation conducted on a mandatory basis since 1993 contains summative elements on the satisfaction with the course and the teacher, which are routinely summarized (and augmented by comments from department chairmen) and can then be used in personnel decisions. This element of incentive for excellence in classroom teaching is well understood by all staff.

11.3.2 However, the contribution of academic staff to teaching and learning goes beyond classroom teaching (even if broadly defined to include project and fieldwork supervision, and in the case of clinical staff, also bedside teaching). The policy of the University explicitly considers teaching performance in the three areas: (a) classroom teaching, (b) RPg student supervision, and (c) other contributions, where the last includes contributions related to teaching in a broad sense, e.g., curriculum development, programme leadership or management, use of innovative pedagogy, pedagogical research, counselling of students, mentoring of junior teachers/ professionals, etc. Extracts from the policy document are in Attachment 6. The inclusion of these elements gives adequate recognition to individual teachers who make significant contributions to the matters relevant to the present framework.

12. Instruments

- 12.1 The present framework is premised on the assumption that strategies must not be simply propelled by enthusiasm, compliance with administrative directives or change for change's sake; rather, strategies must be firmly rooted in evidence. Such evidence may be gathered by a variety of means, including student focus groups and discussion forums (either face-to-face or on the web), and informal feedback from employers or professional groups. In addition, there needs to be formal survey questionnaires that are constructed upon a sound theoretical base and professionally validated.
- 12.2 Three levels of questionnaires have been adopted across the University, and constitute core instruments in the present framework, by providing diagnostic evidence of the attainment of learning outcomes. The three levels of questionnaires are:

(a) Course evaluation questionnaires

Course questionnaires are designed and administered at the department or faculty level. Consistency across the University is achieved by each course evaluation questionnaire using a number of agreed constructs, endorsed by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning. Administration is mandatory for each offering of every course. Selected results from the questionnaires are centrally archived.

(b) Student Engagement Questionnaire at programme level

This questionnaire, for programme-level evaluation, contains a standardised core of scales seeking feedback on the attainment of generic learning outcomes and the quality of the teaching and learning environment. In addition to the standardised core, programmes may include additional scales specific to desired learning outcomes appropriate for the programme in question. The questionnaire is administered to students of undergraduate programmes at least every other year, in a rolling cycle.

(c) Graduate questionnaires

A questionnaire on learning outcomes of fresh graduates in the workplace is administered periodically to fresh graduates and the objective of this survey is to determine, in the view of alumni, if their previous learning experiences in CUHK has had direct influence on the quality of their work as employees. This questionnaire is intended for diagnostic purpose only, and will not be directly related to funding.

In addition programmes are progressively introducing graduate surveys which seek feedback on the attainment of learning outcomes specific to the programme.

13. Implementation

13.1 Evaluation of processes

- 13.1.1 All processes included in this integrated framework are themselves properly evaluated. This evaluation will provide feedback to improve the processes.

13.2 Timetable

13.2.1 The integrated framework has been progressively implemented as follows:

- (a) A standard template has been produced for the planning of new courses and programmes;
- (b) Departments are expected to conduct course reviews at least once every three years;
- (c) Each department has provided a brief annual progress report on teaching and learning as part of its Annual Departmental Records starting from the Annual Departmental Records of 2003–04. In the last year of a three-year period, these progress reports become more detailed and, for example, include the course reviews.
- (d) Each department is required to plan for and submit the timetable for self-evaluation of each programme, which should be taken place at least once every six years. The programme self-evaluation is followed by a programme review.
- (e) Starting from 2006–07, 5% of the total allocation to all teaching departments has been informed by the results of the programme reviews and through the annual progress reports in alternate years;
- (f) A compulsory training programme for new teachers of Assistant Professor rank or below was launched in September 2004;
- (g) The use of a range of evaluation questionnaires is now embedded within University processes.

13.3 Reinforcement of principles

13.3.1 Internal reinforcement of the underlying principles of the integrated framework has come from growing acceptance within the University of the value of reflection upon practice. The inherent processes involved in stimulating such reflection are embedded in the framework and have now been demonstrated as leading to enhancements to the quality of teaching and learning.

13.3.2 The underlying principles for this framework has subsequently been reinforced by initiatives from the UGC which are entirely consistent with the vision of the present framework. The focus upon student learning outcomes is consistent with the recent UGC enterprise in promoting the importance of outcomes-based teaching and learning. The entire framework, and in particular the formation of the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning and the inclusion of regular reviews for programmes, is similar in principle to the proposed formation of the Quality Assurance Council, and its proposals of periodic audits of teaching and learning in Hong Kong universities.

14. Attachments

- 1 Executive summary of the Report of the Review Committee on General Education
- 2 Guide for course planning
- 3 Guide for programme planning
- 4 Guide for course review
- 5 Guide for programme review
- 6 Extract on teaching performance in staff assessment

Report of the Review Committee on General Education

Executive Summary

Objectives and Expectations

1. GE as a key part of the curriculum nurtures students as educated persons with the intellect and inclination to appreciate broad issues of concern to humanity and modern society. GE targets the growth of the whole person rather than specialists; specifically, GE courses are not adjunct to the major subject. [Paragraphs 2.1–2.5]
2. GE aims at (a) broad intellectual perspective and understanding the values of different disciplines, (b) sensitivity to the common concerns of humanity, (c) development of judgment and values, (d) awareness of the connections across fields of knowledge and the potentiality for integration, and (e) life-long learning capacities. [Paragraph 2.6]
3. GE courses should aim at the same intellectual level and carry the same workload as major courses. [Paragraphs 2.7 & 4.1]

Management and Administration

4. The Terms of Reference of the Senate Committee on GE (SCGE) should make explicit reference to course approval, and the membership of SCGE should include teachers appointed ad personam. [Paragraphs 3.8–3.11]
5. A Standing Committee should be established under SCGE to examine course proposals and monitor quality in respect of University (but not College) GE courses. The Executive Committee under SCGE should be abolished. [Paragraphs 3.12–3.15]
6. External experts should be invited to review and advise on the GE programme at intervals of three years, similar to visiting examiners in major subjects. [Paragraph 3.17]
7. The Office of University GE should collate and archive relevant data (e.g. course syllabuses and outlines) for all University GE courses. [Paragraph 3.18]

Curriculum and Requirements

8. All University GE courses should be structured into four Areas: Our Own Heritage; Nature, Technology and the Environment; Society and Culture; Self and Humanity. Students (S7 entrants) should elect at least one course from the first area, and one course from each of the other two areas complementary to the major field. [Paragraphs 4.1–4.3]
9. All GE courses should possess certain desired characteristics, e.g., emphasis on breadth and connectivity rather than depth alone. [Paragraphs 4.4–4.5]
10. A total of 15 units should be required for S7 entrants, and 21 for S6 entrants, with a reduction of 3 units for professional programmes. [Paragraphs 4.3 & 4.7]

Quality Assurance

11. SCGE advised by the Standing Committee and assisted by the Office of University GE should approve proposals for University GE courses. Criteria should include objectives, level and workload, proposed Area, the desired characteristics of GE courses, the outline, assessment scheme and reading list. [Paragraphs 5.1–5.6]
12. Approval should be for a maximum period of three years, after which each course has to be reviewed. Existing courses will be reviewed on a schedule to be worked out. [Paragraphs 5.7–5.8, 5.14 & 6.4]
13. The implementation quality should be assured through course evaluation, peer reviews and advice by external experts. [Paragraphs 5.10–5.14]
14. Continuous quality improvement should be sought through an annual forum for sharing experience, annual focus group feedback from students and staff, and triennial external reviews. [Paragraphs 5.15–5.17]
15. Student assessment should be clearly set out in course proposals, and should be linked to educational objectives. Examination papers will be archived and subject to scrutiny, and grade distribution will be adjudicated by the Examination Panel. [Paragraphs 5.19–5.23]
16. The resources flowing to each Department as a result of teaching GE courses should be made explicit, to provide incentives. [Paragraphs 5.24–5.25]

Other issues

17. More use of English in GE should be encouraged. Proposals to be considered by Senate Committee on GE, after consultation with various stakeholders. [Paragraphs 6.1–6.2]
18. Proposals not affecting the curriculum of students should be implemented immediately. The new curriculum should apply to the next cohort admitted. [Paragraphs 6.3–6.4]

Guide for Course Planning

The course planning guide is to be used during the process of planning an initial offering of a course and upon major revisions. Please use the attached Form A for all courses other than General Education courses and Form B for General Education courses. This course planning guide provides guidance on completing the Course Outline section in the latter part of the form.

For multiple section courses taught by several teachers, the Course Outline should provide a coordinated overview of the teaching in the whole course. Individual teachers are encouraged to provide outlines for their own sections, in which a degree of diversity is encouraged. The Course Outline should show how diverse approaches to teaching contribute to the achievement of the same specified learning outcomes for the course.

Learning outcomes

The capabilities, fundamental knowledge and skills students will be expected to have developed during the course or programme need to be clearly specified. At the course level, these outcomes will be intimately related to the fundamental concepts of the discipline. As students progress towards completion of their programme the learning outcomes can be expected to have a wider significance. Course planning should ensure that the graduate capabilities included in the programme plan are addressed in several courses, as appropriate.

Content

The fundamental concepts which need to be understood in each course. Content specification should not be exhaustive, but should highlight key principles.

Learning activities

These are the teaching and learning activities which are designed to result in the specified learning outcomes. A table for reporting the hours spent on types of learning activities in a course is shown below. Types of learning activities should be adapted to suit types of teaching within departments. For each type of learning activity the formal class hours should be specified, together with an estimate of the number of hours students will be expected to spend on the activity out of class.

Lecture (hr) in /out class	Interactive tutorial (hr) in /out class	Lab (hr) in /out class	Discussion of case (hr) in /out class	Field trip (hr) in /out class	Projects (hr) in /out class	Web-based teaching (hr) in /out class	Other (hr) in /out class
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of learning activities. Both formative and summative assessment should be consistent with the desired learning outcomes. A table for reporting the percentage of marks allocated to various types of assessment is shown below. Again, the type of assessment needs to be adapted to suit departmental practice.

Essay test or exam (%)	Short answer test or exam (%)	Selected response test or exam (%)	Essays (%)	Presentation (%)	Problem sets (%)	Lab reports (%)	Other (%)

Feedback for evaluation

Feedback is an integral component of the curriculum development cycle. Sources of feedback need to be recorded in a curriculum outline. At the planning stage this section on sources of feedback is a listing of the ways in which feedback will be gathered, as a plan for the evaluation of the course. The table below lists potential sources of feedback.

Qualitative feedback from student panels/ forums/ internet forums	optional	informal interaction is strongly encouraged
Course questionnaire	mandatory	administered every time the course is run
Tailored questionnaire	optional	
Visiting/ external examiner report	optional	
Peer review	optional	
Reflection of teachers (including evidence from assessment)	mandatory	
Other		

Learning outcomes

[Please enter a list of outcomes, bearing in mind that students need to develop both an understanding of fundamental concepts and graduate capabilities. While all courses may contribute generally to ‘understanding discipline concepts’ or ‘developing critical thinking’, it is most useful if the description of the learning outcomes focuses on the **main** contribution of the course to the programme as a whole.]

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Learning activities² [Hours are calculated on a per-week basis. Please specify if otherwise.]

Lecture (hr) in /out class	Interactive tutorial (hr) in /out class	Lab (hr) in /out class	Discussion of case (hr) in /out class	Field trip (hr) in /out class	Projects (hr) in /out class	Web-based teaching (hr) in /out class	Other (hr) in /out class
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
M,O, NA	M,O, NA	M,O, NA	M,O, NA	M,O, NA	M,O, NA	M,O, NA	M,O, NA
M: Mandatory activity in the course O: Optional activity NA: Not applicable							

Assessment

Essay test or exam (%)	Short answer test or exam (%)	Selected response test or exam (%)	Essays (%)	Presentation (%)	Problem sets (%)	Lab reports (%)	Other (%)

Feedback for evaluation

[A plan for the evaluation of the course is needed. Please list the sources of feedback information which will be collected.]

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Recommended learning resources

[Please provide a reading list or a set of references.]

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Explanatory Notes

1. If a course is designed for one or more Major/Minor programmes, please specify in respect of each programme whether it is a 'required' (compulsory for students in the programme) or 'elective' (to be freely chosen by students) course. Such specifications may be concentration-dependent, i.e., a course may be specified as 'required' for one concentration (be it specialism, stream or area) but as 'elective' for another.

2. (a) For the "in/out class" cells in "Lecture", please fill in the number of hours that students spend in class on lecture material, and the number of hours that students are expected to spend out of class studying lecture material. The same applies to all other "in/out class" cells of other learning activities.

- (b) The following example illustrates how a three-unit course with two hours of in-class lecture plus four hours of out-of-class activities, and one hour of in-class tutorial plus three hours of out-of-class activities per week should be presented in the 'Learning activities' section of the form in the following manner:

Lecture (hr) in /out class		Interactive tutorial (hr) in /out class	
2	4	1	3
M,O, NA		M,O, NA	

However, if the two kinds of meetings are held at different intervals (e.g., two hours of lecture plus four hours of out class activities per week, and one hour of laboratory plus four hours of out-of-class activities every two weeks), or if the kind of meeting is NOT held on a per-week basis (e.g., three hours of field trip every month plus two hours of further work), please specify their respective intervals separately in the relevant boxes as follows:

Lecture (hr) in /out class		Lab (hr) in /out class		Field trip (hr) in /out class	
2/week	4/week	1/two weeks	4/two weeks		3/month + 2 hr further work
M,O, NA		M,O, NA		M,O, NA	

Course Syllabus (the fundamental concepts and academic content which need to be understood)

The core content/syllabus should be covered by all sections of the same course and selected topics may be added by individual course teacher. Core content should comprise not less than 50% of the course.

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Learning outcomes (The capabilities and fundamental knowledge students will be expected to have developed during the course need to be clearly specified.)

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Teaching and learning activities (Total contact hour: 1 unit = not less than 13 hours)

Lecture	Interactive tutorial	Lab	Field Trip	Other (please specify)
() hr	() hr	() hr	() hr	() hr

Tentative assessment method (please check if appropriate)

Test/Exam				Assignment			
Essay	Short answer	Multiple-choice or True/False questions	Other (Please specify)	Essays	Presentation	Lab /project reports	Other (Please specify)

Other assessment format:

Required readings

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Recommended reading list/references

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Relation to the GE objectives and the GE desired characteristics

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Endorsement

Chairman of Department Board:	
Signature	Date:

Remarks:

Guide for Programme Planning

The programme planning guide is to be used for an initial offering of a programme and upon major revisions. This guide indicates the aspects of teaching and learning which need to be incorporated in a programme plan. The procedure for approval of programmes and the additional planning information needed are on the following page.

Learning outcomes

The capabilities, fundamental knowledge and skills students will be expected to have developed during the programme need to be clearly specified. The desired capabilities should be contextualised into the discipline/ profession of the programme. For professional programmes these include the capabilities required by a graduate to function in the profession.

At the programme level learning outcomes include graduate capabilities, e.g.,

- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Self-managed learning
- Adaptability
- Problem solving
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal skills & groupwork
- Computer literacy

Content

Programme level curriculum planning is partially an aggregation of course-level processes. An important additional consideration is showing how the content in the courses fits together to form a coherent curriculum.

Learning activities

Learning activities can be reported by aggregating the information for each course. A table for reporting is shown on the next page.

Assessment

Assessment can also be reported by aggregating the information for each course, using the table on the page after next.

Feedback for evaluation

Sources of feedback need to be recorded in a curriculum outline. At the planning stage this section on sources of feedback is a listing of the ways in which feedback will be gathered, as a plan for the evaluation of the programme. The table below lists potential sources of feedback applicable at programme level.

Qualitative feedback from student panels/ forums/ internet forums	mandatory	
Student Engagement Questionnaire	mandatory	administered every other year
Course questionnaire	mandatory	overview of feedback on courses
Tailored questionnaire	optional	
Visiting/ external examiner reports	mandatory	
Reports from professional accreditation	applicable to professional programmes	
Graduate surveys	optional	
Programme reflection and action plan (including evidence from assessment)	mandatory	
Other		

Learning Activities

The number of hours of time allocated to each type of learning activity. Data is entered by course and can then be aggregated to give programme level data.

Types of activity should be customised to suit the nature of teaching in a department.

	Compulsory/ optional	Lecture (hr) in/out class	Interactive tutorial (hr) in/out class	Lab (hr) in/out class	Discussion of case (hr) in/out class	Field trip (hr) in/out class	Clinic (hr) in/out class	Projects (hr) in/out class	Web-based teaching (hr) in/out class	Other (hr) in/out class
Course 1										
Course 2										
Course 3										
Course N										
Total for programme										
Total (as % of programme)										

Assessment

The percentage of marks allocated to each type of assessment.

Categories should be customised to suit the nature of assessment in a department.

	Compulsory / optional	Essay test or exam (%)	Short answer test or exam (%)	Objective test or exam (%)	Essays (%)	Presentation (%)	Problem sets (%)	Lab reports (%)	Projects (%)	Cases (%)	Other (%)
Course 1											
Course 2											
Course 3											
Course N											
Total for programme											
Total (as % of programme)											

Procedures for introduction and revision of programmes

The following procedures should be observed by a department when it wishes to introduce a new major or minor programme at the undergraduate level or a new postgraduate programme, or to institute revisions for an existing programme.

Proposals for introducing a *new* programme should be submitted to the following bodies for endorsement and approval:

- (a) the Department Board concerned;
- (b) the Faculty Board concerned;
- (c) if applicable, the Senate Committee on General Education;
- (d) if applicable, the Graduate Council;
- (e) the Senate Academic Planning Committee (Senate APC); and
- (f) the Senate.

Proposals for revising both the existing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study (within the framework approved by the Senate), including the addition and deletion of individual courses, should be submitted by the Department Board to the Faculty Board concerned for approval.

The proposals should contain the following information:

- (a) justification for introducing a new programme or for revision of an existing programme;
- (b) curriculum design and basic philosophy (following the guide for programme planning);
- (c) list of courses and course descriptions;
- (d) justification for requirement of additional staff (if any);
- (e) justification for requirement of additional equipments and facilities (if any) for both instruction and research – library holdings, teaching aids, laboratory equipments, research facilities, etc.;
- (f) coordination and collaboration with related fields (where applicable);
- (g) implementation schedule – to take effect from a certain academic term/year or from a certain year of intake as the case may be.

If the course will be co-listed as a General Education course, the course proposal should also be submitted to the Senate Committee on General Education for approval.

Guide for Course Review

A useful way to do a course review is to reflect on the feedback gathered in response to the sections in the template for course planning. Review should include the facets of the curriculum elements and other issues which are found to be relevant. Sources of feedback specified in the course plan should be used to provide evidence for reflections.

Course review will be the responsibility of the teachers of the courses and their departments. Each of the courses, including those offered for non-major students, should normally be reviewed once every three years. The review should result in an action plan for the improvement of the course. New courses or those which are substantively changed may benefit from being reviewed in each of the first two years offered.

Learning outcomes

Reflections on learning outcomes should examine evidence for the achievement of outcomes specified in the course plan.

Relevant sources of feedback are:

Qualitative feedback from student panels/ forums/ internet forums	if useful
Course questionnaire	mandatory
Tailored questionnaire	optional
Reflection of teachers (including evidence from assessment)	mandatory

Content

Review of content should include coherence between elements of a course, particularly where multiple teachers are involved.

Relevant sources of feedback are:

Visiting/ external examiner report	optional
Peer review	optional
Reflection of teachers (including evidence from assessment)	mandatory

Learning activities

Reflections on the choice of learning activities should focus on balance and appropriateness for the specified learning outcomes.

Relevant sources of feedback are:

Qualitative feedback from student panels/ forums/ internet forums	optional
Course questionnaire	mandatory
Tailored questionnaire	optional
Reflection of teachers	mandatory
Peer review	optional

Assessment

Reflections on the choice of assessment should focus on whether formative feedback is supplied and whether the assessment scheme appropriately measures the specified learning outcomes.

Relevant sources of feedback are:

Course questionnaire	mandatory
Visiting/ external examiner report	if useful
Peer review	optional

Action plan

A list of refinements to be made to the course the next time it is offered.

Guide for Programme Review

There are two types of programme reviews.

- Departments are expected to make their own internal reflective review of a programme every year. This review results in the annual progress report on each aspect of the action plan. The sections below indicate suitable sources of evidence for monitoring and reporting progress.
- Programmes will be reviewed at least every six years by a review panel appointed by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning. This document provides a guide to the format of the programme self-evaluation to be conducted prior to these reviews.

The department responsible for the programme will be expected to provide its own reflections on the programme under the headings of the curriculum elements. Evidence should be drawn from the sources of feedback specified in the programme plan. The reflections should identify strengths and challenges. Action taken, or to be taken, to make improvements should be included.

Programme management and quality assurance

This section should describe the quality assurance procedures used to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the programme. A brief report should be provided on the functioning of the curriculum committee or other body which oversees programme management and quality assurance procedures. Available evidence of the effectiveness of processes in improving the quality of teaching and learning should be included.

Learning outcomes

This section should report on the achievement of learning outcomes included in the programme plan, including the development of graduate capabilities.

Relevant sources of feedback are:

Qualitative feedback from student panels/ forums/ internet forums	mandatory
Student Engagement Questionnaire (scales on capability development)	mandatory
Reports from professional accreditation	applicable to professional programmes
Graduate surveys conducted by the Department/Faculty	optional
Departmental reflection (including evidence from assessment)	mandatory

Content

Programme level review of content is partially an aggregation of course-level processes. An important additional consideration is the coherence of the curriculum.

Relevant sources of feedback are:

Student Engagement Questionnaire (coherence of curriculum scale)	mandatory
Visiting/ external examiner reports	mandatory
Reports from professional accreditation	applicable to professional programmes
Departmental reflection	mandatory

Learning activities

Learning activities should be reported on the proforma shown in Attachment 2. Reflections on the range of learning activities should encompass variety, balance and effectiveness in promoting specified learning outcomes.

Additional relevant sources of feedback are:

Qualitative feedback from student panels/ forums/ internet forums	mandatory
Student Engagement Questionnaire (scales on teaching and learning environment)	mandatory
Course questionnaire	mandatory
Tailored questionnaire	optional
Departmental reflection	mandatory

Assessment

Assessment should be reported on the proforma shown in Attachment 2. Discussion of assessment should encompass variety, fairness and, most importantly, relationship to learning outcomes.

Additional relevant sources of feedback are:

Visiting/ external examiner reports	mandatory
Departmental reflection	mandatory

Professional development

The procedures for the professional development of all teaching staff in curriculum design and teaching effectiveness should be described and reflected upon. Departments which use teaching assistants for a significant part of teaching in a programme should detail the professional development provided. This should include an evaluation of the adequacy of that professional development.

Responses to Visiting/ External Examiner Report

The self-reflection document should note any comments and suggestions, relevant to teaching and learning, which were included in the report of the visiting/ external examiner. This section should also report responses to and actions taken in response to the comments and suggestions. This section is likely to involve cross-referencing to other sections of the self-reflection document.

Extract on teaching performance in staff assessment

Teaching includes not just lecturing, but all activities that contribute to the education outcome of university students; mastery of subject matter and also how the students learn (including independent life-long learning skills and attitudes).

Assessment Indicators:

- (1) Classroom Teaching (where “classroom” is broadly understood to include, for example, bedside teaching in the case of clinical staff, field instruction, etc.)
 - student assessment: mainly based on course and teaching evaluation results, including those of general education courses, and as interpreted by the Department Chairman/Faculty Dean as applicable
 - peer review: e.g. class visits, syllabus review, peer review of public lectures or lectures before professional societies
 - undergraduate project/thesis supervision
- (2) Postgraduate Supervision
 - number and quality of postgraduate students supervised and graduated
 - publications by postgraduate students
 - placement of graduates
 - opinions of graduates if available
- (3) Teaching (Other Contributions)
 - curriculum and teaching materials development (including cases and textbooks, etc.)
 - programme leadership or management (but mere participation, if such duties are already compensated for by course reduction or remuneration through outside practice, should not of itself count; however, programme leadership or management resulting in exceptional and positive outcomes should count)
 - developmental and validation work for improved student assessments (examinations)
 - development and use of innovative pedagogy
 - pedagogical research
 - counselling of students, relationship with students
 - mentoring of junior teachers/professionals
 - assessment indicators may include peer review, comments of external examiners, grants obtained for teaching development, teaching-related awards, related publications, etc.

(from proposal on Assessment of Teaching Staff, which has been endorsed by the ASRC)