

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Delivering for Our Students Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Strategy 2021-28

Preamble

The teaching and learning (T&L) ambition of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) finds expression in a set of institutional learning outcomes devised more than a decade ago. Our University Educational Aims (UEAs) for undergraduate students, articulated within the context of an enabling curriculum structure and an outcomes-based approach to student learning (OBASL), were adopted as part of the transition to a normative four-year curriculum undertaken by Hong Kong's entire higher education sector in 2012. In the 2010s, they underpinned a highly successful reengineering of the undergraduate learning experience at HKU, and delivered a consistently excellent set of educational outcomes. Today, HKU is well regarded globally, ranked highly by the major agencies, and able to attract outstanding staff and students from around the world. Successive reports, notably from the Quality Assurance Council, testify to a strong T&L track record, underpinned by robust quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE) mechanisms.

2 Looking into the decade of the 2020s, HKU remains forcefully committed to its UEAs and determined to deliver on them to the fullest extent possible for all students. At the same time, there is broad awareness throughout the institution that sweeping change in the wider world must be reflected in our T&L provision. In the past two academic years, social unrest in Hong Kong and the Covid-19 pandemic globally have forced much T&L online, either wholly or in hybrid mode. Great innovations made by teachers across the campus need to be sustained once we move to a 'new normal' beyond the pandemic and are able choose the extent of our engagement with online learning. In parallel, social and economic change not just in Hong Kong but globally is intensifying shifts in the expectations placed on universities by the societies they serve. It is therefore time for HKU to devise a new T&L strategy. Built on extensive consultation with staff and students in 2020-21, 'Delivering for Our Students: Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Strategy 2021-28' presents a framework mapped onto the University Grants Committee (UGC) planning horizon of the next two triennia. As is clear from the paper's sub-title, the recommendations apply solely to undergraduate T&L.

Process

3 The consultation process for this T&L strategy was launched in summer 2020, when I formed a small task force with academic colleagues in the Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL), who brought to the table expertise developed through many years of T&L support at HKU. We worked for a couple of months to lay the groundwork for campus-wide debate in 2020-21. At an early stage, we also reached out to the Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning), the Director of the Common Core and senior colleagues in the Technology-Enriched Learning Initiative (TELI). We also made reference to academic debate about both evolving pedagogy in global higher education and wider forces of change.

4. At the outset, we noted that considerable T&L strategizing took place in advance of the 3-3-4 transition in 2012, when solid foundations were laid. A pivotal paper, ‘Transforming Student Learning: New Undergraduate Curriculum under the “3+3+4” Structure’, was deliberated by Senate in April 2008. Among other provisions, Senate endorsed the six UEAs and the curriculum structure for undergraduate study that remain in place today. It adopted an enabling curriculum structure, with universal learning experiences in the Common Core and language-enhancement courses and extensive student choice in the rest of the curriculum, unless professional accreditation requirements come into play. It resolved that OBASL would underpin T&L at HKU, starting from 2008-09 and with full implementation from 2012-13.

5. In the 2010s, all T&L strategizing took place within this framework and, simultaneously, within frameworks established by the University’s ‘Strategic Plan (2009-2014)’ and ‘HKU Vision 2016-2025’. Additional papers were written. In June 2011, for instance, Senate approved an e-learning strategy. In July 2015, it endorsed a second e-learning strategy. Both then triggered review processes. In the second half of the 2010s, the T&L components of ‘HKU Vision 2016-2025’ continued to reflect a commitment to the six UEAs, the enabling curriculum structure and OBASL. Throughout the decade, T&L strategizing was also captured in successive Academic Development Plans and Planning Exercise Proposals (PEPs) submitted to UGC as part of its triennial planning system.

6. In the task force, we acknowledged the ongoing relevance of this raft of policy making. In particular, we agreed that the UEAs, the enabling curriculum structure and the outcomes-based approach adopted in 2008, all of which were enhanced following a May 2017 focused review, work well and are broadly accepted across the campus. (During our subsequent consultation process with teachers and learners, we received no major criticism of any of these elements of HKU T&L.) We also noted that they align with analyses of skillsets widely said to be required by a rapidly-changing global economy, such as a list issued by the World Economic Forum in its ‘Future of Jobs Report 2020’.¹ We therefore felt confident that our existing UEAs can be taken as the framework for T&L strategizing today. Equally, we noted that there is a need to revisit many important issues to ensure that HKU has a T&L strategy plus allied sets of key performance indicators (KPIs) that are fit for purpose in the 2020s.²

7. In setting up town-hall meetings with colleagues and students, and in launching a survey of current students and recent graduates, we decided to attend only to undergraduate T&L, which is often significantly different from postgraduate T&L, and to focus on student learning mediated by teachers. In October and November 2020, we held 11 town-hall meetings with academic staff (one for each Faculty and one for the Common Core). While all could be attended virtually through Zoom, some also offered an in-person option. In total, 550

¹ In the report, released in October 2020, 15 key skills are listed for job seekers in 2025: (i) analytical thinking and innovation; (ii) active learning and learning strategies; (iii) complex problem-solving; (iv) critical thinking and analysis; (v) creativity, originality and initiative; (vi) leadership and social influence; (vii) technology use, monitoring and control; (viii) technology design and programming; (ix) resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility; (x) reasoning, problem-solving and ideation; (xi) emotional intelligence; (xii) troubleshooting and user experience; (xiii) service orientation; (xiv) systems analysis and evaluation; (xv) persuasion and negotiation. World Economic Forum, ‘The Future of Jobs Report 2020’ (World Economic Forum, 2020), p.36.

² HKU has T&L KPIs for UGC’s sector-wide University Accountability Agreement and for the internal resource allocation exercise overseen by the Budget and Resources Committee.

colleagues joined those meetings. I also scheduled half-a-dozen town-hall meetings with undergraduate students and recent graduates, though these were sparsely attended. By contrast, a student and recent graduate survey, also administered in October and November 2020, generated extensive feedback, with responses from 1025 current undergraduate students and 89 recent graduates.

8. In the break between the two main semesters of 2020-21, we reflected on all we had learned from the town-hall meetings and the survey returns, and drafted the first version of this paper. A January 2021 report based on data from European universities generated a useful checklist of enablers, barriers and useful measures for improving online T&L.³

9. To gather input on our draft, we asked for advice from senior administrative colleagues with a wealth of T&L experience. I then sought ‘in principle’ support from the Senior Management Team (SMT). Thereafter, I requested feedback from the 10 Faculty Boards, which have both staff and student representation, and from the Common Core Curriculum Committee. In several areas, the feedback was quite complex and will require a longer period of analysis and debate. Those areas have thus been omitted from this paper and will be dealt with separately, as proposed by some Faculties in their written responses. The revised draft was endorsed by Academic Board and the Teaching and Learning Quality Committee (TLQC). It was also discussed for a second time by SMT.

Findings and recommendations

10. This paper is therefore the product of wide-ranging discussion and debate at HKU. It does not capture the full array of innovation being implemented every semester by teachers in their courses and programme teams in their programmes. It does seek to embrace ideas shared with us by colleagues, students and recent graduates. While it may not reflect every issue raised, it makes every effort to synthesize the major talking points. It is structured according to key sets of challenges used to order debate during the consultation process.

Expectations

11. HKU’s OBASL framework generates expectations among both students and teachers. In effect, our UEAs for undergraduate students constitute an informal contract between the University and its undergraduate students. What the UEAs indicate is that, no matter which pathway students take through HKU’s enabling curriculum, they will attain the six headline educational aims. To deliver on this commitment, HKU has devised course and programme learning outcomes, which feed into the institutional learning outcomes. In turn, important audit functions are undertaken through the Programme Learning Outcome Achievement Scheme.

³ The four main enablers cited by respondents were: proactive participation of staff and students; professional development and training; institutional strategies; and investment in equipment and infrastructure. The four main barriers were: lack of staff resources; lack of external funding opportunities; difficulty to devise a concerted institutional approach; and lack of staff motivation. The four main useful measures for improvement were: peer exchange within the institution; national or international training opportunities; collection and analysis of institutional data; and exchange and collaboration through university networks. Gaebel, M., Zhang, T., Stoeber, H. and Morrisroe, A., ‘Digitally Enhanced Learning and Teaching in European Higher Education Institutions’ (European University Association, 2021), p.11.

Programme Learning Outcome Assessment Plans (PLOAPs) seek to ensure that every academic programme can demonstrate through direct evidence that students have attained the programme's learning outcomes. Programme Learning Outcome Achievement Reports (PLOARs) present the relevant data on a three-year cycle. It is evident that this entire hierarchy functions properly only if it works at the foundational level of the course. Only if we deliver on course learning outcomes are we able to deliver on programme and institutional learning outcomes. Any failure at the base brings the entire structure tumbling down.

12. While all this is well understood throughout the institution, our QA and QE mechanisms for ensuring we do indeed deliver at the level of course learning outcomes are not always robust. Student Feedback on Teaching and Learning (SFTL) scores for course and teacher effectiveness inform regular performance appraisal exercises. We also have an open door policy for teaching. However, we make little structured use of SFTL returns and have limited peer review of teaching. Small reforms could thus make a big difference. It is **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning), working in collaboration with the Vice-President (Academic Development), take the lead in instituting two key reforms. First, to provide formative support to teachers with student evaluation scores at the lower end of the spectrum, programmes should monitor SFTL course effectiveness scores. When the rolling average falls below 50 in a single offering, or below 60 across three successive offerings, and in each case is also among the bottom 10 percent of all such scores within the Department or School, mentorship arrangements should be put in place to assist the colleague in reworking the course. Ideally, these arrangements should come from within the programme and should be implemented in consultation with relevant line manager. Assistance from CETL may also be sought. The broad aim will be to trigger a productive conversation around teaching. Second, structured peer review of teaching should be built into routine staffing procedures. For any major staffing action, specifically award of a second three-year contract for assistant professors on the tenure track and all promotion and tenure decisions, the University should require that the dossier contain at least three peer review reports on teaching: one from within the programme, one from within the Faculty, and one from a cognate Faculty. All three reports should be commissioned by the relevant Head of Department or Faculty Dean. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R1**).

13. Turning to course and programme review, one clear danger is that PLOAPs and PLOARs, though institutionally galvanizing at the outset, become rather formal, even bureaucratic, as time elapses. Within courses, there is a tendency to rely on two sources of data. Feedback from external examiners derives from direct evidence of student learning and generates some discussion within programme teams, but is not comprehensive in coverage. SFTL returns are comprehensive but rely on student perceptions and rarely trigger debate in programme teams. Within programmes, data collected through the Student Learning Experience Questionnaire (SLEQ) is deliberated through annual Faculty visits, though those visits are seldom attended by full programme teams. HKU also surveys recent graduates and seeks benchmarking input from external examiners. Debate among the entire set of teachers comprising a teaching team, informed by relevant quantitative and qualitative data, can thus be quite limited. There is thus a need for us to further enhance our mechanisms for ensuring that we deliver on the informal contract for all undergraduate students. To do so, it is **recommended** that the University experiment with new forms of programme review, both formal and informal.

In each of the two main semesters, for instance, we could invite a small team of external assessors with relevant disciplinary knowledge to visit our campus for one teaching week, meet with a selected programme team, sit in on its classes, engage in dialogue with its teachers and students, and compile an evaluation report. The report could then be deliberated within the programme team to drive reform. Equally, programme teams could simply institute ways to learn from each other about the teaching that takes place within their programmes, drawing on student evaluation data, peer review and other sources of information. It is **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) work with two programme teams chosen on a voluntary basis to create a pilot scheme of external review in 2021-22, and also devise a schedule of consultation with programme teams to discuss informal modes of programme review. At the same time, the external examiner system should be reviewed. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R2**).

14. For courses to deliver on their learning outcomes, there must be alignment at the level of both class activities and course assessment. Class activities must be designed to deliver on the course learning outcomes, and course assessment must be designed to evaluate whether students have in fact attained them. In this context, many students and teachers feel that exam-based assessment is not particularly appropriate in a university setting, or especially well designed and constructed at HKU. The experience of the past two academic years, when such assessment has come under renewed scrutiny, has deepened this belief. It is therefore **recommended** that HKU reinforce its commitment to diversity in assessment policy by reviewing and in some cases eliminating exam-based assessment, especially when authentic assessment can productively replace a terminal examination. To ensure diversity, it is proposed that in all courses no single element account for more than 50 percent of overall course assessment. Applications for exemption, including for professional programmes, should be submitted to the relevant Faculty Board, with endorsement from the director for Common Core courses and from the programme leader for all other courses. Faculty Boards will report on the exemptions they have authorized through regular annual reports submitted to Academic Board, via its Sub-Group, and Senate. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R3**).

15. Contained in review of the assessment policy is the more general issue of feedback. This is difficult to capture within the framework of course learning outcomes, but nevertheless essential to student learning. Furthermore, we know from students that feedback is often deficient and sometimes non-existent, particularly on work presented in final exams, but also in other course contexts. It is **recommended** that all 10 Faculties ensure that they have in place a robust assessment policy that is fully communicated to all teachers and students. It is further proposed that programme teams review their feedback mechanisms, with a view to ensuring that in all courses students are provided with quick, frequent, readily available and constructive feedback. Not all feedback has to be individual, for whole-class feedback can be very effective. Opportunities for students to receive individual feedback must still be present in all courses. In parallel, HKU will need to ensure that support, resources and evaluation mechanisms are in place to enable teachers to provide effective feedback to their students. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R4**).

16. Also related to student expectations, HKU's digital infrastructure needs to be audited, not least in light of changing learning patterns in the past two academic years when much T&L has moved online. For students, the central digital interface is HKU Moodle. While we already have a commitment to full use of Moodle, implementation can be variable. The result is that students taking a minimum of 40 six-credit courses at HKU encounter a wide range of practice and may feel confused even about matters such as where to find course scheduling information. It is therefore **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) chair a small task force charged with reviewing LMS functionality in HKU Moodle and devising a baseline understanding of the use to which it will be put by teachers, with that baseline expected to cover all core aspects of course delivery. Furthermore, making use of Moodle well above the baseline should be strongly encouraged by programme teams, with good practice shared actively among teachers in programmes and Faculties. In this context, building on our e-portfolio pilots should be encouraged throughout the campus. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R5**).

17. This array of student expectations generates corresponding expectations among teachers. It is **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning), in collaboration with the Dean of Student Affairs, consult with students to devise a code of academic conduct. Ideally, the code will clarify for students how they are expected to engage with their courses, teachers and classmates, and will address issues of gender, sexuality and diversity. It will specify fair use of teaching materials uploaded to HKU Moodle. The core aim will be to co-construct a code that enhances and embeds a productive and generative learning culture and a positive, supportive and respectful learning environment, all cast within the framework of the UEAs. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R6**).

18. Linked to this, teachers can expect that student evaluations, submitted for courses and teachers through SFTL and for programmes and overall experience through SLEQ, generate robust data by means of a high response rate. To this end, it is **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) work with programme teams interested in experimentation to devise a pilot study that ties return of student evaluations to release of course grades, since even a seven-day window is likely to have an impact on response rates. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R7**).

19. Additionally, teachers can expect to receive from HKU ample opportunity for continuous professional development (CPD). Ideally a portable qualification will be created, signalling robust engagement with this agenda and enabling colleagues to teach with greater capacity and confidence. In turn, the qualification should be open to all HKU teachers above a defined threshold, and not just those on the professoriate track. It is therefore **recommended** that CETL take the lead in devising a CPD programme leading to a recognized postgraduate qualification and linked, for HKU staff, to the current Advance HE fellowship scheme. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R8**).

20. Teachers can also expect to have access to excellent support from teaching-focused central units, notably CETL, the Examinations Office, Information Technology Services (ITS), TELI and HKU Libraries. While the support offered to teachers during the social unrest in 2019 and the pandemic in 2020 was outstanding, there is always room for improvement. It is therefore **recommended** that CETL, the Examinations Office, ITS, TELI and HKU Libraries review their operations in light of the recommendations made in this paper and draft individual reports on ways forward. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R9**).

21. Finally, all teachers can expect to gain recognition for outstanding performance. To this end, HKU has an evolving Teaching Excellence Award Scheme (TEAS). To ensure it remains fit for purpose in the 2020s, the scheme needs to be examined within the framework of this T&L strategy. It is therefore **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) undertake a TEAS review. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R10**).

Skills

22. Alongside the content knowledge students gain from their courses, we aim to ensure that they graduate with a defined skill set. This brings us back to the six UEAs for undergraduate students, which define that set. One point that emerged in feedback from students and recent graduates was lack of awareness of the UEAs. It is thus **recommended** that Faculties and programme teams enhance their efforts to introduce the UEAs to students joining HKU. They could, for instance, provide incoming students with a document explaining each UEA in relation to their programme, and giving examples of excellent attainment. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R11**).

23. Looking at our UEAs in some detail, it is clear that we deliver on many of them for many students. At the same time, however, we know from SLEQ data, recent graduate surveys and other feedback collected from students and fresh alumni that we do not deliver on all of them for all students. This is an important QA/QE issue. We thus need to work through our six main UEAs and determine how we can ensure they are more fully attained. The proposals in this paragraph are not exhaustive. Rather, they focus on issues identified by colleagues and students as requiring attention. In Table 1 below, SLEQ data, captured on a 5-point Likert scale, are reported for some cohorts of undergraduate students in the first year (UG1) and final year (UGF) of study. All were enrolled in the new four-year curriculum. Each of the sub-paragraphs below makes reference to the data reported in Table 1.

Table 1. SLEQ data on attainment of the UEAs

Cohort (Year admitted / Year graduating)	UEA1		UEA2		UEA3		UEA4		UEA5		UEA6	
	UG1	UGF	UG1	UGF	UG1	UGF	UG1	UGF	UG1	UGF	UG1	UGF
2012-13 / 2015-16	3.64	3.82	3.46	3.75	3.76	3.95	3.67	3.89	3.70	3.91	3.55	3.77
2016-17 / 2019-20	3.63	3.93	3.45	3.77	3.80	4.04	3.76	3.99	3.70	3.93	3.56	3.80

(a) UEA 1: Pursuit of academic/professional excellence, critical intellectual inquiry and life-long learning

SLEQ data show that students feel relatively confident about attaining UEA 1. Nevertheless, an opportunity that is not fully exploited relates to undergraduate research and undergraduate teaching. This is picked up in paragraph 26 of the Aspirations section below.

(b) UEA 2: Tackling novel situations and ill-defined problems

SLEQ data show that students are not especially confident about attaining UEA 2, and some report not being exposed at HKU to novel situations and ill-defined problems. It is therefore **recommended** that within 12 months programme teams report to TLQC on measures they have taken, or introduced, within the curriculum to deliver on UEA 2 (**R12**). Paragraphs 26 and 27 below may be relevant to debates within programme teams about UEA 2.

(c) UEA 3: Critical self-reflection, greater understanding of others, and upholding personal and professional ethics

SLEQ data for UEA 3 are the most positive of all six UEAs. However, important opportunities for interdisciplinary learning are not fully exploited. The kinds of ethical dilemmas, both personal and professional, that students will face after graduation are rarely limited to specific disciplines. It is thus **recommended** that within 12 months programme teams report to TLQC on courses within the curriculum that promote interdisciplinarity by bringing students together from a variety of academic and professional contexts to expose them to broad-based analysis and debate of personal and professional ethics (**R13**).

(d) UEA 4: Intercultural communication, and global citizenship

SLEQ data for UEA 4 are again quite positive. Often, though, the drivers of appreciative student feedback are HKU's global student mobility programmes and international professoriate profile. By contrast, we know from student feedback and our own experience that campus culture is often segmented between local, Mainland and international students. This is an issue that needs to be addressed in the classroom as much as anywhere else. It is therefore **recommended** that within 12 months programme teams report to TLQC on measures they have taken, or introduced, within the curriculum to deliver on UEA 4 (**R14**).

(e) UEA 5: Communication and collaboration

SLEQ data for UEA 5 are good, though static. To enhance communication skills, HKU has a nascent communication-intensive course (CiC) initiative led by the Centre for Applied English Studies (CAES). Teachers of CiC-badged courses commit to both teaching and assessing at least two communication competences, selected from a list of

four. Students are thereby able to acquire enhanced communication skills through disciplinary, Common Core and language-enhancement courses. CiC-badged courses are reported in students' Academic Attainment Profile. To deliver the communication competences desired by employers and indeed ourselves, the CiC initiative needs to be expanded. Soon there should be sufficient CiC-badged courses for HKU to launch an annual Distinguished Communicator Award, with eligibility set at a minimum of eight CiC-badged courses and awards made to a maximum of 20 students, based on a set of panel interviews. To enable this to happen, it is **recommended** that programme teams list within their major programmes a minimum of eight CiC-badged disciplinary courses, that the Common Core have among its suite of approved courses at least 50 CiC-badged courses, and that all language-enhancement courses offered by CAES and the School of Chinese be CiC-badged. Programme teams should report to TLQC on progress within 24 months (**R15**).

(f) UEA 6: Leadership and advocacy for the improvement of the human condition

SLEQ data reveal that students across different programmes and cohorts do not feel well equipped with regard to UEA 6. Again, the scores are static over time. While some relevant skills can be taught, there is no substitute for providing students with authentic leadership experiences. It is therefore **recommended** that within 24 months programme teams report to TLQC on the measures they have taken within the curriculum to enable students to become leaders and advocates for the improvement of the human condition. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R16**).

Aspirations

24. Beyond delivering fully on our existing commitments to all undergraduate students, we have further aspirations, some of which have only come clearly into focus in the past year or two. In the most general sense, we want our students to maximize their potential at HKU. To deliver on this ambition, we need to design programmes and pathways that can draw them out and enable them to excel. Raising our eyes to the farthest horizon, we also need to consider other ways in which we can enable students at all levels to be the best they can be. In this final substantive section, the paper makes a number of recommendations along these lines. Many HKU projects funded through UGC's Special Grant for Strategic Development of Virtual Teaching and Learning, allocated in early 2021, address these recommendations.

25. The core theme of our PEP for the 2022-25 triennium, endorsed by Senate and submitted to UGC in March 2021, is building the workforce of the future, which we argue will depend less on professional expertise and more on flexible skillsets and interdisciplinary approaches. The PEP roadmap, reaching down to the programme level, should be read in conjunction with this paper. For this T&L strategy, focused on institutional matters, it is **recommended** that the University, led by the Provost and the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) and taking advice from relevant employers and alumni, review the balance between disciplinary and interdisciplinarity (including the role of the Common Core) in all undergraduate programmes, and also between professional and non-professional curricula in

our undergraduate provision. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R17**).

26. Undergraduate research was mentioned in the context of UEA 1 in paragraph 23(a) above, but requires more detailed analysis to determine how our enabling curriculum structure might be revised to generate more systematic integration of research. While student-initiated projects are an important way forward, and should be a key part of HKU T&L culture, we need to recognize that many students require help in getting started with research. One proposal made during the consultation process sought to tackle this issue by building pathways through the curriculum. To engage undergraduate students in research, it was suggested that teachers on a voluntary basis devise simple projects related to their own expertise. Within programmes, these projects can then be shared with first- and second-year undergraduate students. Interested students will be invited to work on them individually or collaboratively with only minimal academic support and to submit reports by an advertised deadline. Students who do a good job might: be added to a database of student research assistants from which academic staff make appointments; have their performance record recorded; be awarded a small amount of research funding for use in senior years; gain eligibility for elite HKU initiatives such as the Laidlaw Scholars Programme and the Undergraduate Research Fellowship Programme (URFP). In this way, students will be able to enter into research at an early stage in their HKU journey and develop competence as they progress. To assist students in getting started, capacity will need to be created centrally or within Faculties, though this would be purely advisory and need not be resource-intensive. At later stages of the student journey, the URFP should be revisited to enhance participation, perhaps through a non-funded pathway with a lower GPA requirement. An allied proposal made during the consultation process sought to open up a student teaching assistant track as a further curriculum pathway. It is **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning), working in collaboration with the Vice-President (Research) on the research side, chair a small task force charged with devising ways of bringing undergraduate research and teaching schemes into operation, ideally for launch at the start of 2022-23. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R18**).

27. For all students, a capstone experience, usually disciplinary rather than interdisciplinary, forms part of the 3-3-4 reforms introduced at HKU. Student feedback indicates that in many cases the capstone works well. This was also the conclusion reached by a May 2017 focused review. In some cases, though, there are shortfalls. To take the provision of capstone experiences to a new level and strengthen HKU policy, the University should create, in conjunction with community partners locally and globally, a set of elite, interdisciplinary, cosmopolitan capstone projects offered electively and managed centrally. The aim will be to work with businesses, NGOs, government and maybe even units in the University to devise projects co-supervised by community partners and a small number of non-professoriate academic staff recruited centrally for the sole task of capstone project support. To ensure that student teams are truly interdisciplinary, basic rules should be laid down: for instance, in any team of six to eight students, at least four Faculties must be represented. To ensure that they are truly cosmopolitan, similar rules concerning local, Mainland and international representation should also be devised. It is **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) chair a small task force charged with devising ways of bringing a capstone

project scheme of this kind into operation, ideally for launch at the start of 2022-23. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R19**).

28. More broadly, beyond the scope of individual courses or even programmes, the University needs to consider how to build on existing experience with student advisers and linked initiatives to enable students truly to become partners in T&L. One proposal that emerged in the consultation process was creation of a peer tutoring association to drive student engagement with this agenda. Funding will be required to obtain dedicated rooms for tutoring, support basic training for tutors and develop the core study support materials needed by most students seeking peer tutoring. As the association becomes increasingly official, HKU should recognise tutors' contribution through awards and letters of recognition. The University also needs to determine how T&L champions throughout the campus, whether in formal leadership positions such as Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) or informal leadership roles such as Teaching Excellence Award winners or CETL-supported Advance HE fellows, can join hands with this initiative. With work being undertaken in CETL, CAES and other units, it is time to consolidate diverse initiatives and devise a campus-wide campaign. It is **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning), working in collaboration with the Dean of Students Affairs, chair a small task force charged with facilitating this raft of activity. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R20**).

29. Recent experience of moving much T&L online generates an invaluable opportunity for HKU to consider the best blend of face-to-face and online learning, including lecture capture and archiving, when the full range of options again becomes available. It also provides a chance to consider the balance of didactic and non-didactic teaching within programmes, and the possibility of introducing an upward sliding scale for non-didactic components as students move through programmes (and possibly even courses). From each perspective, it is important to seek input from current students and recent graduates, through surveys, focus groups and mechanisms such as Staff-Student Consultative Committees. It is thus **recommended** that programme teams deliberate the ideal mix in their programmes of face-to-face and online learning, and of didactic and non-didactic teaching, drawing on relevant student and alumni input. It is further recommended that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) promulgate a set of regulations about what students can and cannot do with T&L materials. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R21**).

30. Related to this, it is clear from the experience of the past year or two that T&L space needs are changing rapidly. To review the provision and design of campus learning space, both formal and informal, it is **recommended** that capacity to undertake a rolling needs assessment be developed in CETL and the Learning Environment Services section of ITS. Specifically, CETL should be provided with resources to undertake benchmarking studies, liaise with all 10 Faculties, engage with students and report periodically via the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) to the Learning Environments Committee (under the Accommodation Committee). For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2021-22 (**R22**).

31. Also related, internationalization of higher education has been transformed by global experience of the pandemic. Virtual student exchange, virtual collaboration in T&L, micro-credentials, digital outreach and so on are not new concepts. However, all are far more prominent now than just a couple of years ago as the move to online learning gathers pace globally. One issue that needs to be explored is the possibility of making use of the extensive amount of course content now captured digitally at HKU for outreach activities. An option that has opened up is for course materials to be ‘licensed’ for sharing with students in development contexts, and for HKU course alumni to work as tutors with their overseas counterparts. In this way, students in jurisdictions with only a fraction of the educational resources available in Hong Kong will gain access to world-class T&L. In parallel, the learning and leadership benefits for HKU students of tutoring courses taken on campus will also be considerable. It is **recommended** that the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) chair a small task force charged with exploring this agenda with a view to reshaping internationalization in T&L. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R23**).

32. Again related, the agenda of adaptive learning is developing rapidly and needs to be embraced by HKU. Adaptive learning creates substantially more productive learning opportunities for students and opens up strategies for teachers to manage students’ learning experience more systematically. It is also able to do so at scale. It operates through online learning pathways comprising structured tasks on a specific topic designed to generate formative feedback. With large corporations such as Pearson Longman moving into the field, adaptive learning is expanding quickly across formal education and work-based learning. During the next decade, it is critical for HKU to catch up and then push ahead of the curve. This will require benchmarking internationally and plotting a clear HKU pathway. It is **recommended** that CETL and TELI join hands to provide leadership for HKU in this sphere. For this recommendation, feedback on implementation shall form part of a consolidated report submitted to Senate, via TLQC and Academic Board, by the end of 2022-23 (**R24**).

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