

APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT FINDINGS

City University of Hong Kong is pleased that the UGC Quality Audit Committee (QAC) has commended the quality of its teaching and learning activities in the key areas of its undergraduate and postgraduate provision. The quality of student learning at City University of Hong Kong is the focal point of our vision to become a leading global university, excelling in research and professional education. It is clear from the QAC findings and comments that we have made further significant progress towards these goals.

The QAC's commendation that City University takes "a proactive approach to improving quality assurance for teaching and learning through the development of institution-wide approaches to facilitate greater consistency in the implementation of quality assurance policy and procedures" demonstrates that the University places the quality of its educational provision as a major priority, and remains determined to rigorously apply principles of continuous quality improvement to all areas of its work. The proactive approach taken by City University is further evidenced by the Audit Panel's commendations for our successes "in lifting the capabilities of our students and preparing them for professional careers", "supporting the integration of international and mainland students on campus", "for the robust arrangements in place to support research students at off-shore locations", "the quality of supervision and management of doctoral candidature", "the emphasis we give to teaching and learning" and "the extent to which we involve and support student participation in University Committees". These commendations demonstrate the effectiveness of the student-centred approach to teaching and learning undertaken at City University which has developed a reputation for providing excellent student support. City University is also particularly pleased that the QAC recognised and commended the excellent work of the Institutional Analysis Group and its central role in improving data collection, interpretation and use which contributes to the further development of the evidence-based culture in the University. This is an area of great importance for the University and provides verifiable evidence and indicators of our progress to ensure that we achieve our strategic and academic goals and can identify further areas for future development.

City University is grateful for the QAC's affirmations of the future directions being taken in its wide-ranging review of the committee structure and quality assurance framework to ensure we continue to set even higher standards in terms of our mission to nurture and develop the talents of students, and to create applicable knowledge in order to support social and economic advancement. We are also heartened to receive the QAC's affirmations of our work in effectively engaging the academic community in developing rigorous performance indicators, benchmarking and "the progress made by the University in implementing a comprehensive, progressive and forward-thinking criterion-referenced assessment policy for all taught programmes". We will continue to develop all these areas as we approach the advent of the four-year degree structure in 2012. We will continue to exert efforts to improve our student feedback surveys and note with interest the UGC's separate intention to explore a sector-wide instrument(s) for this purpose. Given the affirmation from the QAC, City University's work in this area would clearly be of benefit to the Hong Kong Higher Education sector as a whole. City University is also pleased to note the support from the QAC for our establishment of an Office of Education Development and General Education (EDGE) which is providing leadership in preparation for the General Education component of the four-year degree. This acknowledgement together with

the QAC's affirmation for our graduate and postgraduate outcomes, and their advice on the provision of further guidance on the operationalisation of these, is welcome and work is already advanced in this regard.

Over the past years City University has been restructuring and re-organising in preparation for the four-year degree in 2012. This transition has involved considerable change across the sector and within individual universities. Inevitably, some of the major reviews of policy and practice are ongoing and we are continuing to work towards the new system. We are grateful for the advice given by the QAC panel in relation to some of these initiatives. The review of the committee structure at City University will shortly be completed and we will ensure that Quality Assurance functions are given priority going forward, and that this is reflected in the new structure. We agree that the line management structure is crucial in this regard and this is one reason why the review process has had to be thorough. The programme review process is being built into the new quality assurance framework document which will replace the 3P's document going forward. The consultation for the new quality assurance framework, including programme review processes is now underway and we anticipate completion and the start of implementation by the end of this year. This will ensure that the process will be in place and mature by the beginning of the four-year degree in Hong Kong. A new Information Technology strategy document was in preparation at the time of the QAC visit and this work is currently being advanced by EDGE and the office of the Chief Information Officer who will shortly put their proposals out for wider consultation prior to the committee approval process. The teaching and course feedback questionnaires are currently under review but this will have to be done in concert with the 2012-2015 Academic Development Proposals Exercise organised by the UGC because the UGC is clearly interested in introducing some sort of sector wide instrument(s). As indicated earlier, City University has much to offer in this regard and we will liaise accordingly. Since the QAC visit, the composition of thesis panels has been changed to reflect our own observations and those of the QAC panel and to ensure we are now in step with best practice. The development of performance indicators using a top-down and bottom-up process was affirmed by the QAC and we are already working towards the relationship between these indicators and performance review for both individual academic leaders and their units as recommended. In the past 12 months, City University has been seeking to appoint a senior person to oversee risk assessment and management functions across the whole institution including those identified by the QAC as related to student internships. City University will continue to work hard on its image and profile, ensuring that our local profile is consistent with our fast-growing international reputation. As the QAC suggests, we will continue to project our distinct image and use this as a reference point for further internal and external development.

Finally, City University wishes to express its sincere thanks to the QAC Chair, members, and the UGC Audit Coordinator and colleagues for their professional and rigorous approach to the conduct and reporting of this audit exercise. City University's policy and culture of evidenced-based continuous quality enhancement was clearly recognised and shared by the QAC. In this spirit we will continue to look for areas of improvement as we move towards the challenges of the four-year degree.