



## Concerns and Responses

### Executive Summary:

In response to the concerns about the potential impact of the current social issues on the University community received from both undergraduate and postgraduate students and their representative bodies, the senior management of the University have held numerous meetings and gathered information from a large number of the student community at City University of Hong Kong. Under the existing social atmosphere, these more personal methods of communication with students ensure we can go far beyond a narrowly directed ‘Open Forum’ where many students might feel unable to share their diverse views openly and in sufficient depth. This document has been compiled by the Emergency Response Unit (ERU), with input from all relevant parties, to provide a comprehensive set of responses and statements to the concerns which have emerged from these meetings, and those that have been received in writing from various individual students and their representative bodies.

Specifically, concerns have been received in writing, and at numerous meetings with University staff, from both local and non-local undergraduates and postgraduates who registered for the dialogue sessions on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019, from informal sharing meetings with postgraduates on 16<sup>th</sup> October, in writing and from meetings with the International Society of the Students’ Union, City University of Hong Kong Postgraduate Association (CUPA) and the City University of Hong Kong Students’ Union. Senior management has therefore put together their considered responses and advice to the concerns posed in this document.

It is clear from the concerns we have received (some in Chinese and some in English) that a very wide range of often radically different views exist amongst our students, ranging from on and off campus safety

concerns through to requests to support one political view or another. Consequently, the responses in this document are squarely based on the principle that City University of Hong Kong is a higher education institution and our overriding duty is to provide a safe learning environment for every stakeholder in our campus community. The very broad range of views expressed in this document confirm our stance that City University of Hong Kong will not be drawn into supporting any particular political view point and will continue to provide appropriate assistance to our staff and students through the various offices of the University so that we can continue to maintain and promote a safe, welcoming and civilized learning environment for everyone.

As stated in the joint statement issued on 20 October 2019 by the Chairmen of the Councils of the eight Universities funded by the University Grants Committee, “The common mission of universities is to advance knowledge and promote understanding. All members in university communities are expected to uphold free speech and to respect the views held by all other members of the community. In this sense, universities cherish a diversity of views and promote robust, yet civilized, and respectful discussion of such views. Universities are, however, not battlegrounds for the resolution of political issues and should not be drawn into supporting any particular political position.”

Universities are autonomous. We call on every member of the campus community to support us in this endeavor and oppose outsiders from entering campus and disrupting the operation of the University.

## **Introduction:**

The University puts staff and students safety as the top priority. In view of the escalating social situation in Hong Kong, Professor Kuo Way, CityU President, set up an Emergency Response Unit (ERU) on 12 August. The ERU, which is led by Vice-President (Student Affairs) and Vice-President (Administration), coordinates different units for the provision of appropriate assistance.

Through the ERU, we directly provide appropriate assistance to staff and students, including:

- operating a 24-hour emergency hotline;
- offering temporary residential arrangements for students in need;

- temporarily providing transportation for staff and students serving different routes;
- disseminating the latest information to staff and students;
- communicating directly with staff and students and referring them to related departments for appropriate assistance;

On 14 October, we arranged three sessions of dialogue with local undergraduate students, non-local undergraduate students and postgraduate students respectively. However, before the start of the first session with the local undergraduates, the venue was surrounded by a large number of unidentified people who prevented the dialogue from taking place. The situation was chaotic and it posed a safety risk. One staff member fell ill during the disruptions and needed to call for an ambulance. For safety reasons, the University had to cancel all three dialogues.

It is worrying that a considerable proportion of those who protested and destroyed property on campus were masked and unidentified, and were probably outsiders. The University severely condemns these actions and appeals to everyone to safeguard the peace on campus and not to allow anyone from urging disruption on campus.

CityU students come from different places of the world. They belong to different groups; live in different contexts of life; have different socioeconomic backgrounds; differ in age, ethnicity, year of studies and disciplines; and join different student organisations according to their interests. It is essential that all groups holding different views are respected.

Although the aforementioned dialogues could not be held, we have received 1000 questions, concerns and opinions from individuals and student organisations. To reflect the views of the students comprehensively, the University has listed the questions of different parties and student organisations on a fair and impartial basis instead of confining itself to a small amount of biased views.

Some of the questions listed by the students are in Chinese while some in English. Occasionally there are typos. The University has kept the original questions and has not revised or translated them. The 214 questions come from the categories of student groups listed below:

<b>Student groups</b>	<b>Number of questions/opinions</b>
G. Registrants of Dialogue Sessions (UG Local, UG Non-local and PG)	106
H. Informal Sharing (with PG on 16 October 2019)	16
I. City University Postgraduate Association (CUPA)	34
J. City University of Hong Kong Students' Union (SU)	48*
K. Informal Sharing (with Non-local UG on 14 October 2019)	5
L. International Society, City University of Hong Kong	5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>214</b>

*\*In the “訴求及意見調整” document submitted by the Students’ Union, there are 36 questions and opinion. Together with the sub-items, there are a total of 48 questions.*

The areas that most students are concerned with are listed in descending order as below:

<b>Areas students concern with</b>	<b>Opinions received</b>
I. Teaching, learning and employment arrangement for students	43
II. Campus safety	40
III. Assistance to injured and arrested students and about the police entering campus to carry out duties	32
IV. Freedom of speech / Expression of views	29
V. Students’ communications with President and University management	23
VI. Other assistance to students and staff and measures to ensure their safety	12
VII. The separation of politics and education	11
VIII. Student conduct	10
IX. The anti-mask law	4
X. Emotional assistance to staff and students	2
XI. Others	8
<b>Total:</b>	<b>214</b>

Most of the concerns have been adequately addressed in previously published ERU notifications. We have summarised these concerns and University’s responses under different categories into different sections for your easy reference. The University has also received a vast number of opinions and complaints, but we have not included them in the below “Concerns and Responses”.

The autonomy of the universities is the essence of higher education, but almost no one has submitted relevant questions.

We must stress that we are all concerned about freedom of speech. Hong Kong enjoys many freedoms and the rule of law. When students request freedom of speech, they must respect others' freedom of speech, too. Any act of freedom must comply with laws and rules. Violence and vulgar speech are not tolerated. The University adheres to self-autonomy. All academic subjects can be examined on campus as part of academic pursuit but the University is not a stage for street politics.

Meanwhile, the University supports abiding by the law and following regulations. Within its capability, the University will always provide assistance and advice to staff and students. This is in keeping with the pastoral care of our stakeholders and does not represent any support for the personal view of any stakeholder.

This report has not included the questions raised by CityU staff members who have expressed their worries and discontent about the disturbances on campus since June this year. The University will communicate with them separately. The University has the responsibility to protect everyone on campus, as noted in the ERU's communication. We hope everyone remain tolerant of others' viewpoints and maintain mutual respect.

For full report, please log into the intranet: [Concerns and Responses](#)

Emergency Response Unit

25 October 2019