Lingnan University 2025/2026 SDG Report
SDG 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION



No. 1 in the world (THE Sustainability Impact Ratings 2026)

1st United Nations University Hub in Asia

1,117 Research Outputs

73% First-Generation Students

Lingnan University advances **SDG 4: Quality Education**, recognising education's power to transform lives and support sustainable development. Ranked world No. 1 for Quality Education in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for two consecutive years, Lingnan demonstrates its commitment to inclusive, equitable and high-quality education. As it transforms into a comprehensive research-oriented university in the digital era, Lingnan combines teaching excellence, research innovation and community engagement to nurture socially responsible global citizens and lifelong learners. Through innovative learning opportunities and knowledge transfer, the University broadens educational access and contributes to a more equitable and sustainable society.

Advancing Quality Education Through Inclusive and Responsible AI Innovation

Aligned with Lingnan University's commitment to inclusive, equitable and high-quality learning (Lingnan University, 2025), Professor Haoran Xie, Associate Dean of the School of Data Science, combines artificial intelligence (AI), learning sciences and language education in his interdisciplinary research to advance Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). His work focuses on strengthening teacher competence, enriching learning experiences, and promoting responsible and evidence-based educational innovation through learner-centred pedagogy, digital literacy and equitable learning opportunities.

Enhancing educators' capabilities is a central priority. Zou et al. (2025) proposed the Pedagogic AI Competence (PedAIComp) framework, comprising 12 competencies across four domains: AI-powered digital resources, AI-assisted teaching and learning, AI-enhanced assessment, and learner empowerment. Its six proficiency levels provide guidance for teacher self-assessment, professional development and inclusive instructional design, helping educators integrate AI purposefully rather than merely adopting new tools. The framework also offers a basis for continuous professional learning across different stages of educators' digital competence development, supporting teacher capacity building and lifelong learning.

Prof. Xie's empirical research explores how emerging technologies can address barriers to effective learning. In a study involving 49 undergraduates and eight sessions of robot-assisted English-speaking practice, Zhang et al. (2026) found statistically significant pre-post improvements in fluency, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy and pronunciation. Interviews highlighted the value of authentic interaction, responsive feedback and non-judgemental practice. These findings offer practical insights for expanding opportunities for individualised speaking practice when teacher time and resources are limited, supporting personalised learning and language skills development.

Further research addresses the reliability and educational value of AI systems. Li et al. (2025) surveyed retrieval-augmented generation in education, identifying applications in tutoring, assessment and student support alongside challenges involving accuracy and scalability. Wang et al. (2026) reviewed 474 studies of agentic AI in education and identified gaps in pedagogical grounding, long-term evaluation and human oversight. Only 138 studies explicitly drew on educational theory, underscoring the need to integrate technological innovation with sound pedagogy. Complementing these findings, Chen et al. (2026) analysed 5,226 articles in *Computers & Education*, mapping research themes across teacher competence, online learning and generative AI. Collectively, these studies offer evidence to guide educational research, system design and institutional decision-making, supporting evidence-informed educational innovation and quality enhancement.

Responsible AI adoption is equally important. Yang et al. (2024) developed a 16-principle ethical framework addressing the responsibilities of students, educators and administrators, including equitable access, bias, privacy, academic integrity and independent critical thinking. Together, these contributions support Lingnan's vision of quality education by connecting advances in AI with learner-centred pedagogy, educator development and inclusive, ethical practice, emphasising educational equity, human oversight and responsible digital transformation.

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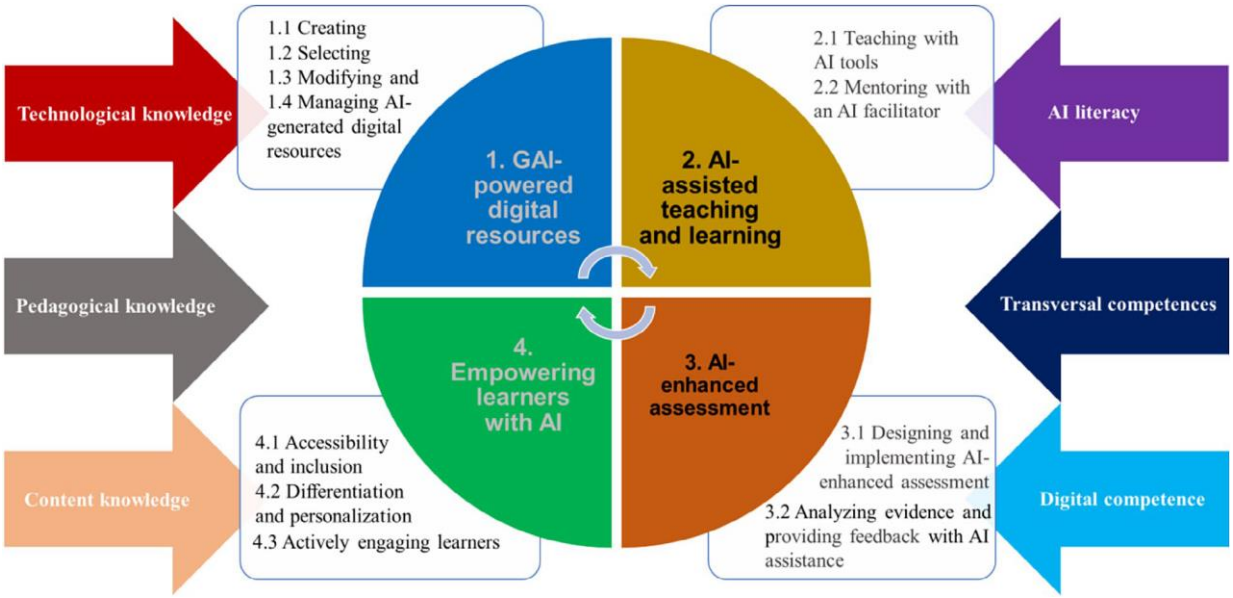


Figure 1. Educators' pedagogic AI competence framewor (reprinted from Zou et al., 2025)



Figure 2. Students engaged with NAO robot in language classes (reprinted from Zhang et al, 2026)

Funding Support to Promote Education Equality

In support of SDG 4, Lingnan University is committed to promoting equal access to quality education by offering a wide range of funding schemes based on academic merit and financial need. These initiatives provide research and taught postgraduate students from around the world with opportunities to enhance their international learning experiences and participate in academic exchanges. In the 2025/26 academic year, 122 PhD students received financial support from the University's Scholarship Scheme. Through these funding schemes, Lingnan ensures that talented students, regardless of their background, can pursue advanced education and contribute to the global academic community.

Engaging Students in Academic Exchange through Global Academic Events

Lingnan University actively promotes quality education and knowledge exchange in alignment with SDG 4 by organising diverse academic events such as the Postgraduate Summer School and Postgraduate Conference. The Postgraduate Conference 2026 attracted more than 300 postgraduate students, researchers, and academics from Australia, the Chinese Mainland, Ghana, Indonesia, Taiwan region, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. Serving as a dynamic platform for global dialogue, the conference enabled research and taught postgraduate students to share their research progress, future projects, and transformative learning experiences. Through

these initiatives, Lingnan fosters a vibrant international academic community, equips students with global perspectives, and enhances the inclusiveness and excellence of higher education [link].



The three-week Postgraduate Summer School 2026, co-organised by Lingnan University and the University of Oxford, features academic exchange, research collaboration, and workshops led by renowned scholars, fostering a vibrant global community of postgraduate learners. The programme attracts over 260 postgraduate students from local and international universities, including 18 outstanding Lingnan students who received top scholarships to participate in the UK session of the summer school at the University of Oxford [link].



Experiential Learning and Raising Awareness of the SDGs

The Lingnan Entrepreneurship Initiative (LEI) provides students with diverse experiential learning opportunities to develop their problem-solving abilities and entrepreneurial skillsets. Beyond engagement with local communities, students also gain regional and global exposure, enabling them to apply and transfer knowledge in real-world contexts aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Lingnan University Entrepreneurship Fund (LUEF) provides seed funding and support to foster innovation and entrepreneurship within the Lingnan community. It is open to current students, recent alumni, and faculty/staff, offering up to HKD500,000 in funding for innovative and meaningful entrepreneurial initiatives based on the project's stage of development [link].

The Innovation and Impact Fund provides seed funding and support to foster innovation and entrepreneurship within the Lingnan community. It is open to all full-time students, offering up to HKD30,000 in funding for innovative and meaningful entrepreneurial initiatives [link].

Lingnan University also offers both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in environmental education. The Minor in Environmental and Scientific Literacy focuses on cultivating science literacy as a lifelong skill applicable to a broad range of scientific and technological issues, rather than promoting content mastery in a single discipline.

Participants strengthen their critical thinking, communication, and debate skills through the core curriculum and complete a Capstone Experience in their final year.

At the postgraduate level, Lingnan offers a unique Environmental Science programme that integrates the expertise in the Division of Science with the three faculties (Arts, Social Sciences, and Business), as well as partnerships with local and international NGOs. This programme provides a strong theoretical foundation in environmental science while equipping students with diverse hands-on, experiential learning opportunities essential for success in this field.

Advancing Sustainability through Education and Research

Lingnan University actively advances SDG 4 (Quality Education) by integrating sustainability principles into its teaching, research, and community initiatives. The University currently has 27 research profiles aligned with SDG 4 [link], with related projects and outputs covering topics such as artificial intelligence, health inequality and the digital divide, digital competence, environmental education, education qualifications and employability, and quality assurance in higher education [link].

Sustainability is embedded within Lingnan's academic programmes, with specialised curricula in energy materials and technologies designed to prepare students to address global environmental challenges. The University's research initiatives pursue innovative solutions in critical areas such as carbon capture and utilisation, contributing to advancements in direct air capture technologies and the development of a carbon-negative industrial park.

Lingnan also fosters strategic partnerships with industry, government, and international institutions to enhance the impact of its sustainability-focused education and research. Through these efforts, the University continues to strengthen its commitment to advancing quality education, promoting sustainable development, and nurturing future leaders who will drive positive global change.

Enhancing Educational Opportunities and Community Engagement at Lingnan University

Lingnan University is committed to advancing Quality Education (SDG 4) through a wide range of initiatives that expand educational opportunities and strengthen community engagement. Key projects include the Lingnan University Elder Academy Sit-in Programme, which promotes intergenerational learning; the Secondary School Engagement Programme, which offers tailored activities to inspire younger students; and the Digital Commons, a free online learning platform that provides open access to valuable educational resources.

In addition, the Gerontechnology Practitioner Training Course addresses the challenges of an ageing population by equipping participants with relevant knowledge and practical skills, while the Youth Ambassador Programme connects students with community service opportunities that help them develop leadership and civic responsibility [link].

Depression and Accuracy of Judgment: A Meta-analysis

Led by Professor Hodar Lam, Research Assistant Professor in Lingnan University's Department of Psychology, this study advances understanding of depression, mental health and cognitive processes. Depressive realism suggests that depressed individuals may make more accurate or realistic judgments than nondepressed counterparts. This meta-analytic study (130 articles, 151 samples, N = 33,043) synthesized findings on the relation between depressive mood and the accuracy of judgment, and investigated the conditions under which depressive realism or its opposite—depressive distortion—emerges.

Overall, results indicated a weak but significant depressive distortion effect (Hedges's g = 0.09). Moderator analyses showed that depressive realism was more likely when tasks involved control or contingency judgments, were analytically complex, and self-referent. By contrast, depressive distortion was more likely in severe clinical depression, with tasks that were non-self-referent, low in complexity, or involved ambiguous social information. Notably, distortion effects were more often observed in studies that did not acknowledge depressive realism.

This review clarifies mixed findings on the depression-accuracy relation by identifying task-specific moderators, offering implications for theory and evidence-informed clinical practice. The findings contribute to SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being by advancing knowledge relevant to depression and mental health. They also have relevance to SDG 4: Quality Education by providing an evidence base that can inform mental health literacy, psychology education and critical evaluation of research evidence.

International Conference – Arts for Wellbeing: Creativity, Adaptability, Sustainability

The Wong Bing Lai Music and Performing Arts Unit successfully hosted its inaugural international conference, *Arts for Wellbeing: Creativity, Adaptability, Sustainability*, on 6 February 2026 at Lingnan@WestKowloon, M+, Hong Kong. Supported by the Tin Ka Ping Foundation, the conference brought together leading scholars, experts, and practitioners for in-depth interdisciplinary discussions on the theoretical, pedagogical, and practical dimensions of holistic wellbeing. The conference explored how creative practices, alongside medical and psychological support, can address urban stress and

foster mental health and well-being, community engagement and social cohesion through community music and performing arts.

The conference attracted approximately 120 scholars, artists, educators, and cultural practitioners from Hong Kong, the Greater Bay Area, and overseas, fostering arts education, interdisciplinary learning, international collaboration and knowledge exchange. Participating institutions included Free University of Berlin, Rhode Island School of Design, West Chester University of Pennsylvania, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Metropolitan University, and Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University (BNBU).

The conference contributed to SDG 3 through its focus on holistic well-being and mental health; SDG 4 through arts education and professional knowledge exchange; SDG 11 through discussions on the role of creative practices in fostering socially connected, inclusive urban communities; and SDG 17 through cross-institutional and international partnerships connecting academia, the arts and community practice.





Let's Talk: Co-Designing Empathic Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) Chatbots for the Media Arts Classroom

Let's Talk integrates generative AI into design-thinking teaching to accelerate empathy training and AI literacy, supporting SDG 4: Quality Education through interdisciplinary learning and innovative, human-centred pedagogy. This media arts strand sits within the wider Let's Talk Teaching Development Grant, which also includes empathy training in design thinking for global sustainable development across the Global Development and Sustainability Programme's teaching.

Across six interdisciplinary courses, students co-design chatbots that simulate conversational partners, practise perspective-taking and active listening, and learn to verify outputs through citations and "NOT IN CORPUS" rules in safe, repeatable scenarios. The sequence moves from zero-shot roleplay and "sticky questions" to attachment-only, self-check, and two-bot relay workflows, culminating in a student-built RAG chatbot with controllable sources and parameters. Baseline and follow-up surveys, artefacts and reflections capture changes in communication skills and critical, responsible use of AI, producing widely transferable resources for other disciplines and educators.

The project develops empathy, digital literacy, curatorial skills and prompt-engineering proficiency while fostering equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), cultural sensitivity and inclusive learning environments. These dimensions are relevant to SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. Its interdisciplinary approach connects technology and design thinking with social and sustainability challenges, while adaptable chatbots and shared teaching resources support knowledge exchange and capacity building

among educators. These resource-sharing activities can also support SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals through future educational collaboration.

Organising Units:

- Global Development and Sustainability Programme, Wu Jieh Yee School of Interdisciplinary Studies - Professor Grace Chou, Programme Director and Professor of Teaching
- Wong Bing Lai Music and Performing Arts Unit, Wu Jieh Yee School of Interdisciplinary Studies - Dr Enrico Bertelli, Associate Professor of Practice

Advancing Quality Education through AI Innovation and Global University Partnerships

Lingnan University is advancing SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals through international collaboration, AI-enabled educational innovation and joint talent development.

On 6–7 November 2026, Prof S. Joe Qin, President and Wai Kee Kau Chair Professor of Data Science, participated in the Beijing Forum and a thematic forum on digital intelligence education. These engagements strengthened dialogue on higher education transformation and expanded opportunities for collaboration between Beijing and Hong Kong.

During the forum, Lingnan signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Digital Intelligence International Development Education Alliance (DI-IDEA), initiated by Peking University and comprising more than 30 higher education institutions worldwide. As a founding member, Lingnan contributes to this international knowledge-sharing network exploring innovation in higher education. The partners will explore establishing the “Lingnan-DI-IDEA Joint Centre cum DI-IDEA Asia Pacific Centre” and its potential location in Hong Kong’s Northern Metropolis University Town. Proposed collaboration will focus on industry–academia–research partnerships, educational technology development and the practical application of research outcomes.

President Qin also presented perspectives on AI’s impact on higher education at a university presidents’ roundtable, exchanging insights with local and international leaders on educational value and institutional transformation.

Building on their longstanding partnership, Lingnan and Peking University’s Yuanpei College have jointly organised the Lingnan-Yuanpei STEM Summer Academy for three consecutive years since 2024. They are further developing cooperation in STEM education, innovation and entrepreneurship education, and collaborative talent development.

The delegation also visited Beijing Normal University to discuss AI for Education, joint education programmes and cooperation through the Beijing-Hong Kong University Alliance.

Through its “Liberal Arts + Technology” and “AI +” initiatives, Lingnan connects educational innovation with cross-institutional partnerships, knowledge exchange and capacity building, supporting quality education and strengthening collaboration across Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and the wider international higher education community.



