

Chapter Fourteen

Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Internationalisation

14.1 Introduction

At Lingnan University, internationalisation is an integral part of the university's overall quality assurance and enhancement system. Internationalisation is central to the strategic plan of the university. Quality assurance and enhancement of the international dimension of programmes is in the hands of the Management Board on Internationalisation. The Management Board on Internationalisation, which is under the President and Central Administration, is chaired by the Associate Vice-President (Academic Quality Assurance & Internationalisation) and comprises academic staff representatives from all Faculties and representatives from all major administrative units related to internationalisation. In order to facilitate the representation of students' views on internationalisation as well as interaction between local and non-local students, an overseas student representative, a Chinese Mainland student representative and a local student representative have been added to the Management Board on Internationalisation since 2014-15. The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies (GS) and the administration head of GS have also been added to the membership since 2016-17 given the significant increase in the number of non-local students in the research postgraduate and taught postgraduate programmes in recent years.

14.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Office of Global Education (OGE)

The mission of the OGE is to enrich the academic and cultural environment of Lingnan by facilitating student exchange programmes and promoting activities that instill an international outlook and appreciation of cultural diversity in our students. OGE is responsible for the quality assurance and enhancement of partner selection and evaluation, the quality of exchange students (both incoming and outgoing), as well as campus integration.

14.2.1 Partner Selection and Evaluation

The quality of the student exchange programmes hinges on the quality of partner institutions. Assessing (potential) partners is very important and clear criteria inform the relevant process. Institutional changes are inevitable and over time, the level and nature of Lingnan's cooperation with partners may evolve. It is therefore vital, as part of the quality assurance and enhancement system, that each partner/partnership be evaluated on a regular basis. In response to the recommendations of the QAC Audit Report released in October 2016 and the University's Strategic Plan 2016-2022, the International Partnership Policy Paper setting out the criteria and procedures for setting up new partnership and renewing/terminating existing partnership was endorsed by the Senate at its meeting on 13 March 2017 for implementation with immediate effect.

	Objectives	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures
1.	To assess (potential) partners in order to ensure the necessary level of comparability exists or the requisite degree of diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A set of transparent and clear criteria for setting up new partnerships was revised. A rigorous assessment of the suitability of the proposed partner institution in accordance with the partnership criteria will be conducted. Two levels of partnerships namely Key Strategic Partners and Foundation Strategic Partners were devised. - The proponent of the agreement should discuss the proposal with the relevant Head(s), Dean(s), AVP(s) or VP as appropriate and complete the “Checklist for Prospective Partner”. <p>The proponent will submit the endorsement together with the checklist to the OGE for developing a draft agreement. The draft agreement will be sent by the proponent for review by the proposed partner university.</p> <p>Agreements will be sent to the Office of Council/ Court Business and General Administration (OCCBGA) for vetting before sending to the appropriate parties for signature. Agreements for key strategic partners will be sent to Senate for approval.</p> <p>After the agreement is signed by relevant parties, it will be registered and entered into the OGE’s international agreement database.</p>

	Objectives	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures
2.	To evaluate each partner regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A set of transparent and clear criteria for renewing/terminating partnerships was revised. When the student exchange agreements are coming up for renewal (usually every 3 or every 5 years), the OGE will review the partnership in light of the criteria and make appropriate recommendations on the renewal or termination of the partnership. - For other partners, the OGE will advise the Faculty/School/Centre/Unit concerned six months before an exchange/collaborative agreement is due to expire to arrange for the provision of information on the outcomes and deliverables of the agreement, including as appropriate the level of research activity, the number and performance of students, etc. The Faculty/School/Centre/Unit concerned will reassess the partner university based on these criteria and then seek approval from the VP, AVP(s), or Dean(s) for renewal or termination as appropriate. - The OGE maintains frequent and in-depth communication, both via emails and face-to-face/online meetings at international education conferences, such as NAFSA, EAIE and APAIE, to communicate with each partner on solutions to any relevant issue(s) or question(s).
3.	To identify popular exchange destinations where future partnerships may be located.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE makes use of the Business Intelligence (BI) reporting system to locate the preferred exchange destinations, as expressed by our students. This provides important information on the most desirable and popular places where we may build future exchange partnerships.

14.2.2 Quality of Exchange Students

Lingnan aims to increase the quality of its student mobility. The OGE is responsible for monitoring the quality of the University's exchange students, both incoming and outgoing.

(i) Incoming Exchange Students

	Objectives	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures
1.	To ensure that all incoming exchange students have achieved or met suitable academic standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All incoming exchange students must prove by means of an official transcript the number of credits that they have earned thus far. - All incoming exchange students from non-English speaking countries must provide the OGE with proof of their English proficiency. - All incoming exchange students should apply to their home institutions and follow the selection processes of their corresponding home institutions. - The exchange coordinators of partner universities will nominate to the OGE all their successful applicants. - All incoming exchange students need to submit a recommendation letter to the OGE from a faculty member or the international office of their home institutions. - The eligibility requirements of incoming exchange students (e.g. their English language requirements of TOEFL, IELTS scores, GPA requirements) are listed out clearly on the OGE website and clearly conveyed to exchange coordinators of all partners. All incoming exchange students who are non-native English speakers must have a TOEFL score of 213 (computerbased), 550 (paper based) or 79 (internetbased), or an IELTS (Academic Module) score of 6.0 or equivalent. - The OGE checks if the nominated students from all partner universities have met Lingnan's eligibility requirements. - All eligible nominated incoming exchange student applications need to be approved by the AVP (Academic Quality Assurance & Internationalisation).

	Objectives	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures
2.	To ensure that the information provided by all incoming exchange students is accurate and that their applications are efficiently handled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is an online application system for handling all incoming exchange student applications. This helps to avoid manual errors in the data input process and ensures that all incoming exchange student information is accurate and complete. - All application materials must be verified and endorsed by partner institutions before being submitted to the OGE. - Personal particulars of all incoming exchange students are checked against the copy of official personal identification document, e.g. student's passport/identity card. This helps to ensure that the data submitted by students is valid. - The OGE reviews and checks the data of all incoming exchange students before submitting it to the Immigration Department for visa application.
3.	To ensure that all incoming exchange students meet the minimum credit requirement at Lingnan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All incoming exchange students for semester-long exchange are required to take at least 12 credits to maintain a fulltime student status at Lingnan. This minimum credit requirement is mentioned clearly on the OGE website and the online application form for Student Exchange Programme. - The OGE checks via the Registry's reporting system in order to ensure that all incoming exchange students have registered for at least 12 credits.

	Objectives	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures
4.	To ensure that all incoming exchange students are well informed about the basic information on Hong Kong and Lingnan, as well as their rights and obligations during their studies at Lingnan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An electronic copy of student handbook providing basic information about Hong Kong and Lingnan is uploaded to the OGE website and distributed to all incoming exchange students before their arrival. The student handbook is updated annually in order to provide up-to-date information to students. - The OGE organizes an arrival orientation for all incoming exchange students. The orientation covers a wide range of topics including information about Hong Kong, the different services that they can access to at Lingnan, safety issues in Hong Kong, as well as the rules and regulations of staying in the hostels at Lingnan.
5.	To ensure that all incoming exchange students have adequate protection against accidents and medical expenses during their studies at Lingnan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All incoming exchange students are required to submit insurance proof to the OGE in order to ensure that they have adequate insurance covering travel, personal accident, medical expenses (accident and non-accident), hospitalization and emergency evacuation/repatriation throughout the entire period of their studies at Lingnan.
6.	To ensure that all incoming exchange students settle comfortably into Lingnan and Hong Kong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE organises the Buddies Scheme, with local students assisting the incoming exchange students with the process of settling into Lingnan and Hong Kong. - The OGE organises various excursion activities, facilitating interaction with incoming exchange students and introducing them to Hong Kong culture. Relevant feedback on their experiences is also collected. - The front office of the OGE provides one-stop service for all incoming exchange students. They can come to the OGE for assistance and services.

	Objectives	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures
7.	To ensure that all incoming exchange students' feedbacks are heard and properly dealt with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE conducts online surveys with all incoming exchange students. In the pre- exchange survey, incoming exchange students are asked to evaluate the arrival arrangements, arrival orientation and the Buddies Scheme. In the post-exchange survey, incoming exchange students are asked to evaluate the academic experience, accommodation, campus facilities and services provided by different units of Lingnan. - The OGE imports the data from the surveys into the BI system for storage and analysis. The analysis is an important tool that supports the University's continuous improvement in the area of Internationalisation. - It is not uncommon for incoming exchange students to give their feedback to their home universities. The OGE keeps regular contacts with partner universities, via both emails and face-to-face/online meetings at international education conferences such as NAFSA, EAIE and APAIE to collect and learn from these feedbacks and look for ways for further improvement.

(ii) Outgoing Exchange Students

	Objectives	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures
1.	To clearly formulate aims of student exchange programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE has always made the aims of student exchange programmes explicit and clearly communicates these to students. The learning goals of the student exchange programmes are clearly communicated to all students during the new-student orientation, the student exchange information sessions, as well as on all the OGE promotional leaflets and brochures to students.

	Objectives	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures
2.	To establish selection criteria and procedures for partners in accordance with the purpose of the exchange programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A set of transparent and clear criteria for setting up new partnerships was devised in 2013-14 and subsequently revised in 2016-17 and 2022-23. All potential partners are now assessed according to the criteria before signing an agreement. The OGE always limits the number of partners to the level that best meets Lingnan's needs; and selects them on the basis of a set of criteria, and with reference to the aims and characteristics of Lingnan or a particular programme. It is always the aim of the OGE to strive for structural cooperation (long term instead of one time only).
3.	To assure the quality of all students going on student exchanges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A set of eligibility requirements (such as minimum CGPA, IELTS/TOEFL results, interview performances) has been set out clearly. The OGE enforces these requirements and assesses all students applying for exchange in light of these selection criteria. - The OGE ensures that all students applying for semester-long student exchange programmes go through the interviews. The interviews are conducted by a faculty member together with a colleague from OGE. This is to ensure that the students have the right attitude and personality to go on exchange. - The OGE administers all students' applications for exchange through an online system. The system inputs students' data (such as their personal data, CGPA and IELTS/TOEFL scores) from the Banner system. This helps to ensure the accuracy of the students' data for selection and allocation purpose. - The OGE ensures that all proposed academic plans specified in students' applications for semester-long student exchange programmes are reviewed and recommended by their academic advisers. Students are also required to submit reference letters from faculty members to support their participation in semester-long Student Exchange Programmes.

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4.	To ensure that all students going on student exchange programmes have all the relevant information pertaining to their exchange overseas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE organises pre-departure briefings for all outgoing exchange students. - The OGE provides health and safety advice for outgoing exchange students. The OGE invites exchange returnees, incoming exchange students, faculty members who have relevant background knowledge, Immigration Department of the HKSAR Government, as well as members from the relevant Consulate Generals to share with students their firsthand information and knowledge. - The OGE also conducts individual meetings with every student going on semester-long exchange, advising them on a personal basis on module selection, study plan, credit exemption, accommodation arrangements and any other issues that students may have. - The OGE holds information sessions on exchange scholarships, need-based financial aid schemes and schemes for EDB Subsidy for outgoing exchange students. This is to ensure that students understand the details of each financial support option, including the eligibility, donor requirements, application procedures and obligation of the awardees/recipients. - The OGE updates factsheets and other partners' information regularly on the OGE website.
5.	To ensure that students going on student exchange programmes understand the academic requirements while studying abroad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE sets out the "Guidelines on Completing Study Plan" for all outgoing exchange students and the guidelines are available on the OGE website for students' reference. - The OGE staff members meet with students and provide them with advice on issues relating to drawing up their study plans for exchange. These include the courses available at the partner universities, the conversion of credits back to Lingnan, etc. All students are required to draw up a clear study plan before going on exchange. <p>An important measure to increase the quality assurance and enhancement of student exchange programmes is the involvement of</p>

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		<p>academic advisers in students' selection of modules abroad. The OGE involves the academic advisers at two important stages in students' selection of exchange institutions and the modules abroad. As described in Point (3) above, all students going on semester-long exchange programmes are required to submit their proposed academic plans to their academic advisers at the application stage to ensure that the modules offered by the institutions to which they applied fit into their academic plans at Lingnan. Before departure, all students going on credit-bearing exchange programmes are also required to seek advice on their actual study plans from their academic advisers prior to their course selection at host institutions. This is to make sure that the credits that they are going to earn during the exchange can be recognized recognised and counted towards their graduation requirements at Lingnan. Moreover, students need to attach course descriptions in their applications for any course exemption as stated in their study plans. The study plans will need to be approved by the students' respective subject teachers, Director of Core Curriculum and General Education/Head of Centre for English and Additional Languages (when transferring cluster courses under core curriculum), Director of Service- Learning (when transferring courses with service-learning components) and Heads of Departments of major and minor programme(s) (if applicable) /Programme Directors and the relevant authorities.</p> <p>- The OGE also involves the host institutions in the students' selection of modules. All outgoing exchange students are required to submit a "Course Confirmation Form" with endorsement from their host institutions to confirm their registered courses. This is to ensure that all students take enough credits/courses while they are studying overseas.</p>
6.	To establish selection criteria and procedures for allocation of scholarships and financial aid schemes	- The OGE administers all students' applications for exchange scholarships and financial aid through an online system from 2016-17. The

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	in accordance with donors' requirements.	<p>system inputs students' data (such as their personal data, CGPA and IELTS/TOEFL scores) from the Banner system. This helps to ensure the accuracy of the students' data for allocation purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE ensures that students are allocated to various scholarships and financial aid schemes based on a set of transparent and clear criteria as specified by donors, Office of Institutional Advancement and Public Affairs (OIAPA) and the Education Bureau [including minimum CGPA, IELTS/TOEFL results and financial proof of Grant/Loan received from the Tertiary Student Finance Scheme (TSFS)]. - The OGE annually reviews the number of scholarships available in a given CGPA range and calculates the amount of financial aid based on the available donations and the number of eligible applicants. - The OGE ensures that all students fulfill the requirements and obligations of particular scholarships and financial aid schemes e.g. attending selection interviews/sharing sessions, submitting pre-exchange or post-exchange essays/reports, and completing Civic Engagement Programme and voluntary/social services.
7.	To ensure that the outgoing exchange students receive adequate guidance during the exchange period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE works with all exchange partners to ensure that they will provide orientation and guidance to our outgoing students during their studies overseas. - The OGE keeps contact with outgoing students via email while they study overseas. All students are explicitly told that they can always contact the OGE or the International Offices at the host institutions for guidance and support during their study abroad period.

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8.	To ensure that the quality of the exchange programme is evaluated and assessed for future improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE conducts two online surveys to gather feedback and evaluations from all outgoing students on their experience. In the pre-exchange survey, students are asked to evaluate the pre-departure arrangements while in the post-exchange survey, students are asked to evaluate the overall experience at their host institutions and the services and support provided by the OGE. Students are also asked to evaluate themselves in terms of their personal qualities in six core aspects including interpersonal skills, communication skills, management skills, problem-solving skills, social responsibilities and global perspectives in the pre- and post-exchange surveys. The data gathered from the surveys are imported into Lingnan’s BI system for analysis of the impact of exchange programmes on students’ personal and intellectual development. - To objectively assess the learning outcomes of the exchange programmes, a study adopting the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) has been carried out for outgoing exchange students since 2018-19. Outgoing exchange students are invited to take pre- and post-exchange IDI assessment tests, which objectively measure their intercultural competence. Subsequent briefing sessions and individual profile sessions based on their test results are organized to guide students to prepare for their exchange journeys and make the best of this valuable opportunity. - The OGE collects feedbacks from exchange returnees through other channels such as sharing sessions involving prospective students and student exchange fairs. The feedbacks received will be reviewed by the OGE for the purpose of improvement. - The OGE launches and administers the “STAR (Students Taking Active Roles)” programme as a quality measure in the area of recognition of students’ results. All outgoing exchange

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		<p>students are encouraged to join the STAR programme. They are required to complete a Pre- Exchange Goal-setting Form and a Portfolio of Exchange Achievements. The former describes the objectives and expected outcomes, and the means of achieving them while the latter evaluates the learning outcomes. Both these forms are reviewed by OGE staff objectively.</p> <p>- In case there are issues requiring clarification, OGE staff will conduct meetings with students individually. Those students who were evaluated as achieving the learning outcomes with appropriate standards are given the title of “STAR” in their transcripts as testimonials of their active participation in and achievements during their exchange experience.</p>
9.	To ensure that the academic courses offered by the host institutions are suitable for Lingnan students.	<p>- The OGE takes follow-up actions i.e. setting up individual meetings and/or contacting students with failed course(s) via different means including but not limited to phone/email to understand the relevant reasons and see if students encountered any obstacles during the exchange semester. Subsequent actions are taken with host institutions if appropriate. Also, a penalty system for the outbound exchange students with course failures or registration of courses fewer than the minimum required credits as a full-time student in Lingnan has been imposed for students who go on outbound exchange since Fall 2019. Sponsorships (including air ticket sponsorship, scholarships and programme subsidy) might be clawed back or compulsory service hours might be imposed depending on the percentage of failed credits.</p>

14.2.3 Internationalisation at Home

	Objectives	Quality Assurance and Enhancement Measures
1.	To promote integration between local and incoming exchange students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The OGE organises the Buddies Scheme. The Scheme pairs each incoming exchange student with a local student. This enables students to interact more with each other. All incoming exchange students as well as local students are asked to evaluate the success of the Buddies Scheme. - The OGE organises activities, such as excursions and tours to different places in Hong Kong. Local students and incoming exchange students participate in these activities. The OGE keeps all participation records of these student activities. - The OGE organises some cultural events, such as the International Day and the Student Exchange Fair in order to support campus integration. The OGE keeps participation records of these events.
2.	To enrich students' exposure to intercultural exchanges and broaden students' horizons to prepare them to excel in a globalised world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To organise seminars and talks conducted by external guests (such as faculty members from partner institutions, etc.) to enable those Lingnan students unable to travel offshore to learn about other cultures.