

Chapter Three

Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Teaching and Learning

3.1 Outcome-based Approach to Teaching and Learning (OBATL) in Lingnan

3.1.1 To ensure our continued excellence in teaching and learning, the University has fully implemented the outcome-based approach to teaching and learning (OBATL) from the 2017-18 academic year. The University has taken steps to ensure OBATL implementation in curriculum development, teaching, learning and assessment at both programme and course levels. OBATL is grounded in a set of pedagogical and institutional values and principles that articulate clearly stated “intended learning outcomes” (ILOs) with a set of assessment tasks (methods) for measuring them. OBATL is predicated on the principle that teaching and learning are most effective if they are based upon a high level of mutual awareness between the teachers and students.

3.2 Attainment of Outcomes

3.2.1 Taking an evidence-based approach, the University measures the outcomes of its education, such as Graduate Attributes, Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) and Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs), by various means.

3.2.2 The combination of the academic curriculum and co-curricular education aims at fostering students’ attainment of Graduate Attributes for meeting future challenges. In addition to the requirements stipulated in the curriculum of his/her Major programme, an undergraduate student is required to fulfil the following requirements before graduation:

- English Language Graduation Requirements;
- Integrated Learning Programme;
- Information Technology Fluency Test; and
- Service-Learning.

3.2.3 Language proficiency is a crucial element in the graduate attributes for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The Language Policy ([Appendix A](#)) articulates the aim of the University in providing high quality bilingual (Chinese/English) personnel for Hong Kong and sets out clear principles in the language of instruction, required language levels at entry and exit points, and language education in academic curricular, etc. The Policy on Language of Instruction for Undergraduate Programmes ([Appendix B](#)) and the Language of Instruction for Taught Postgraduate Programmes

([Appendix C](#)) provide stipulations with regard to language of instruction respectively for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.

3.3 Assurance and Enhancement of Teaching Quality

- 3.3.1 To assist in the ongoing journey towards developing a more comprehensive and complete framework that provides a rich, broad-based and fulfilling liberal arts student experience, a Learning and Teaching Statement ([Appendix D](#)) was devised in May 2012 and circulated among the University community. The latest Statement outlines the current state of learning and teaching at the University and articulates the potential breadth and depth of the Lingnan students' university experiences.
- 3.3.2 The University places a strong emphasis on quality teaching. An Induction Programme for new academic staff joining Lingnan is mandatory for all new staff irrespective of their teaching experience. In addition, a newly accredited¹ professional development programme, the Supporting Learning and Teaching Programme (SLT@LU) has been designed to provide academic staff with an opportunity to review and reflect on current learning and teaching practices and strategies with the aim of identifying, developing and improving the teaching and learning practice that is suited to their specific disciplines. Introduced in 2022, the programme is mandatory for new faculty with less than three years' experience in university teaching who cannot demonstrate that they have taken a similar programme elsewhere. Graduates of the SLT@LU programme can use the title 'SEDA Recognised for Supporting Learning' in their credentials. The SLT@LU replaces the former Learning and Teaching Development Programme (LTDP).
- 3.3.3 The University also has a Professional Development Framework (PDF) which outlines the various professional development activities available to staff at different stages of their teaching career. The Professional Development Framework@Lingnan ([Appendix E](#)) was approved by Senate in May 2022.
- 3.3.3 An online interactive [Course Syllabus Generation Tool](#) was developed in 2016. With step by step guidelines, this tool is an interactive template which supports faculty in developing course syllabuses including measurement of learning outcomes and assessment which complies with OBATL. It also points the faculty to related resources in developing learning outcomes and assessment rubrics.

¹ SLT@LU is accredited by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) and aligns to SEDA-PDF Award for 'Supporting Learning'.

- 3.3.4 Developed in 2013 and selectively employed by faculty members, Peer Observation is a voluntary agreement between two or more colleagues to observe each other's teaching with a view to sharing teaching skills and bringing about mutual enhancement of teaching. In this sense, it is a community of good practice which will be beneficial for the continuous professional development of colleagues. This voluntary system will allow teachers to demonstrate their commitment to teaching enhancement and to provide details of the feedback received from peers and subsequent action taken.
- 3.3.5 The Teaching Excellence Awards Scheme (TEAS) was set up to recognise and reward distinguished teachers who have demonstrated outstanding performance in teaching. Once every two years, Teaching Excellence Awards for individual faculty members (one for undergraduate and one for postgraduate) and teams, Certificates of Merit and Outstanding Teaching Award for Early Career Faculty are awarded. University's TEAS recipients are required to share their expertise and good practices with effect from the 2017-18 academic year. The "sharing sessions" are accessible to all stakeholders via the T&L Portal.
- 3.3.6 Teaching Development and Language Enhancement Grant (TDLEG) is allocated by the University Grants Committee (UGC) to its funded universities to support them on teaching development and language enhancement activities. A portion of the TDLEG is used as Teaching Development Grant (TDGs). The TLC normally invites proposals for TDG three times a year. TDG funds are allocated on the basis of competitive bids for projects. Further details are available on the TLC website (<http://www.ln.edu.hk/tlc>).
- 3.3.7 To ensure that teaching faculty have adequate resources constantly to develop their scholarship and profession, as well as keep abreast of the latest pedagogic trends, a wide range of professional development opportunities such as conference grants, sabbatical leave and workshops/seminars are also offered. The Conference Grant for Teaching and Learning Development provides funding to academic staff, administrative staff and part-time staff for conference presentations related to higher education and university teaching and learning. On-line resources are also available to assist academic staff to develop their skills in the use of technology in teaching and learning. Furthermore, TLC staff also provide consultancy related to learning and teaching.
- 3.3.8 The University has in December 2019 adopted an implementation plan on enhancing innovative teaching and learning with a view to achieving the strategic initiative on developing smart teaching and learning and other cutting-edge pedagogies to support teaching and learning endeavours. As a result of the top-sliced TDG project entitled "Advancing Blended Learning @Lingnan to a New Stage" funded by the UGC's

TDLEG for the 2019-2022 Triennium, TLC launched a suite of online resources for staff and students in relation to Blended Learning as well as small scale funding to support staff in innovation in this area. A Faculty Pioneer Scheme, as part of the top-sliced TDG project, appointed Faculty Pioneers from academic units to form a university-wide Community of Practice (CoP) for making contribution to Blended Learning Professional Development activities and to collaborate with TLC (and other Pioneers) regarding Blended Learning projects.

3.3.9 In May 2022, the University approved a paper “Blended Learning Policy and Guidelines: Learning and Teaching in a Digital Age” ([Appendix F](#)) outlining its policy and good practice guidelines for adopting blended learning and teaching approaches with effect from the 2022-23 academic year. The paper highlights the guidance for staff on the design and delivery for blended learning including relevant processes for new and existing courses and programmes wishing to adopt blended learning approaches.

3.3.10 To facilitate sharing of good practices of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, information on good practices in teaching and learning, exemplary course outlines and annual programme reports has been placed on the staff intranet for sharing among colleagues since January 2010. The information is updated annually and can be accessed via the following websites and the Teaching and Learning Portal:

- Undergraduate Programmes
<http://www.ln.edu.hk/reg/info/intranet/gdpract/>
- Postgraduate Programmes
<https://www.ln.edu.hk/reg/info/intranet/pginfo/tpginfo/index.php>

3.3.11 In addition, the TLC launched the online Teaching and Learning Portal System in May 2018. It contains a repository of best practices, including successful teaching and learning projects as well as pedagogical initiatives carried out by academics together with a related list of resources, instructional technology and associated training materials (<https://tlc.ln.edu.hk/portal/>).

3.4 Collection and Use of Feedback

3.4.1 Students, being the major stakeholders, play an essential role in assuring and improving teaching and learning quality. Very often, students’ views and feedback contribute to the regular review of the range, objectives, structure and modes of delivery of courses offered by the University.

- 3.4.2 The Course Teaching and Learning Evaluation (CTLE) is conducted every term to collect student feedback on teaching and learning of individual courses. The [*Policy on Course Teaching and Learning Evaluation*](#) is given in Chapter 10 whereas other details including operational procedures, samples are given in the CTLE webpage at <https://www.ln.edu.hk/itsc/services/learning-and-teaching-services/ctle>.
- 3.4.3 Rebuilt in 2013 from a previous system introduced back in 2004, the voluntary On-line Course Teaching and Learning Enhancement System enabled faculty to gauge student perceptions of the courses they are teaching as a supplement to the term-end CTLE exercise. From the 2017-18 academic year, the Mid-Term On-line CTLE has become mandatory. Staff members have to trigger the use of the instrument no later than the 9th week of a regular term (no later than the 4th week of a summer term). The On-line system allows faculty to utilise questions from the current CTLE instrument, add their own questions and analyse the results. The purpose of the on-line CTLE is to enable faculty to self-assess their teaching and their courses with a view to enhancing both. The mid-term feedback can incentivize faculty to make improvements earlier and benefit the same group of students who filled in the on-line questionnaire. A hands-on guidebook “Mid-Term Online CTLE” is published by the TLC for reference by staff (<https://ln.edu.hk/tlc/tlc-areas-of-focus/learning-analytics/mid-term-course-teaching-and-learning-enhancement>).
- 3.4.4 The Staff-Student Consultation Committee (SSCC), which should meet at least once in each academic year, provides a platform for students to express their views on the programme and individual courses, and for the departments/academic units to solicit student feedback on specific aspects of the programme and courses for continuous improvement. The terms of reference and membership of the SSCC of individual programmes are available on the websites of respective departments/programmes.
- 3.4.5 Additionally, feedback from graduates, alumni and employers is regularly sought and used to inform future planning decisions. All undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes conduct annual graduate surveys to gauge graduating students’ feedback on the quality of the programme delivery. From 2018-19 academic year, First Year Student Learning Experience Survey is conducted to all first year undergraduate students whilst Final Year Student Learning Experience Survey, replacing the Graduate Survey, is conducted for all final year students from March to May each year. An Employers’ Survey and an Alumni Survey are conducted for both undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes (from 2018-19) on a biennial basis.

- 3.4.6 In May 2022, the University approved a paper “Teaching and Learning Evaluation: Policy, Practices and Guidelines” (Appendix G) outlining its policy, good practice and guidelines for conducting Teaching and Learning Evaluation. The paper highlights principles of teaching and learning evaluation, policy on administration of surveys and policy on use of results of evaluation to inform design, development and enhancement of curriculum, co-curriculum and extra-curriculum, as well as teaching and learning.
- 3.4.7 To ensure the academic standard of Lingnan academic programmes in general, External Academic Advisers are appointed for every taught programme in the University to provide an external and impartial check to ensure that Lingnan’s standards are comparable with those of similar degree programmes at tertiary level locally and overseas. Please refer to Chapter 8 for related guidelines.
- 3.4.8 Advisory Boards have been established for different disciplines/departments/language centres as an interface between the Government/industry/commerce/community at large and the disciplines/departments/language centres concerned. The Advisory Boards help plan and keep under review various aspects of courses/programmes concerned for improvement and/or future developments. The Policy on Advisory Boards and Administrative Procedures for Appointment of Members are detailed in Chapter 9.

3.5 Advice and Support for Student Learning

- 3.5.1 Other than academic units, learning support to students is provided by various units including the TLC, Office of Student Affairs, Library, and Information Technology Services Centre (ITSC).
- 3.5.2 The regulating body for University information technology and library services is the Information Services (IS) Management Board, which is a committee under the President and Central Administration. The scope of this Board includes overseeing policy, budget, and service effectiveness of information services related to teaching, learning, research and administration, as well as vetting requests from academic departments and administrative units for computer hardware and software. The objective of this Board is to ensure that recommendations and decisions regarding information services are in line with the University’s strategic directions, goals, and priorities. Its underlying guidelines for decision making include the significance of service needs, the availability of existing resources, the implication arising from the commitment of additional resources by the University, cost effectiveness, requirements that arise from legal, security, risk mitigation needs, and recommendations by internal or external audits. There is student representation on this Board, which means that learning resource needs are also

discussed from the students' viewpoint with a focus on enhancing the student learning environment. The Board has procedures in place for assessing the availability and adequacy of learning resources and support services provided by ITSC and the Library, as well as considering the requests from academic departments and administrative units for computer hardware and software. Further details are given in [Appendix H](#).

- 3.5.3 To better communicate to students the University's expectations regarding their learning, students are introduced to the Guidelines for Learning ([Appendix I](#)) upon first registration.
- 3.5.4 Being a liberal arts institution, the University prides itself on its close staff and student relationship. Academic Advising, being an important process that enhances this relationship, is an interactive process between students (advisees) and their advisers through which students receive guidance on their studies at the University, reflect on their studies and work out a future study plan. The University has devised the Guidelines on Academic Advising ([Appendix J](#)) to underpin the process, and has constantly reviewed the Guidelines to refine the process. An academic advising system, DegreeWorks, was launched in March 2010 to support the process of students' academic advising and their course selection.
- 3.5.5 Introduced in September 2012 and made mandatory from Term 2, 2014-15, the Early Alert System enables faculty members to inform other faculty, academic advisers and, where applicable, the student counseling service, of students who are experiencing difficulties that are likely to adversely affect students' academic studies. The System is placed in the University Intranet web page under the tag of "My Courses". In the 7th week of each term, all faculty members teaching classes in the relevant term are reminded to either to employ the system where they have cases that need to be reported, or inform the departmental secretaries that they have no cases to report.
- 3.5.6 A University-wide academic support mechanism, a Student Peer Learning Facilitation Programme, was launched in September 2014. The purpose of this initiative is to assist students by students, particularly in their first year, in adapting to the academic requirements of a University education.
- 3.5.7 As a form of recognition of students' academic merits and also to motivate them towards better learning, there are recognition scholarships and prizes which are administered by the University and outside organisations and donated by various organisations, memorial funds, professional bodies and individuals.

3.6 Academic Integrity and Honesty

- 3.6.1 Since Term 2, 2008-09, the University has already taken some measures to draw students' attention to academic honesty and help them avoid dishonesty practices. Currently, new admittees are required to sign a form to acknowledge their compliance with the rules and regulations of the University including those concerning academic honesty stipulated in the academic; a note is added in all course outlines to draw students' attention to the issue; a section on plagiarism is included in "A Guide to Campus Life" distributed to all new admittees; the Library includes topics on academic dishonesty in course embedded workshops and offers Library workshops for avoiding plagiarism and introducing proper citations and relevant tools; and the TLC organises workshops for postgraduate tutors and non-local students to inform them about the University policies.
- 3.6.2 In order to enhance students' knowledge and understanding of plagiarism, all new undergraduate students starting from 2016-17 intake and new postgraduate students starting from 2017-18 intake are required to complete an online mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" by the end of their first year in Lingnan. Completion will be indicated by ticking a check-box at the end of the course. By ticking the box, students undertake to have read the materials and watched the online lecture. Students will need to be aware that penalties for plagiarism will reflect the fact that this mini-course has been made available to them. Students will be blocked from course registration if they have not studied the materials by the end of the academic year. Students who are admitted before the implementation of the mandatory completion of the mini-course are also encouraged to study the mini-course materials even though they are not required to check the acknowledgement box.
- 3.6.3 Academic Advisers shall remind their students to complete the task if they have not done so while teachers shall also remind their students to study the mini-course or make reference to it when doing writing assignments. The information of this online course (i.e. <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>) shall be included in course syllabuses when academic integrity is mentioned.
- 3.6.4 Two guidebooks are published by the TLC for reference by staff, viz.: "Focus on Learning: Plagiarism – a Guide for Educators" and "Turnitin, Plagiarism and Assessment" (<https://ln.edu.hk/tlc/support-for-staff/plagiarism-minimization-and-detection>).
- 3.6.5 Also, the anti-plagiarism software "Turnitin" has been used for years and has become a mandatory platform for submitting written assignments for all courses from Term 2,

2016-17, to help check against plagiarism, and as a self-learning tool for students. In addition, reminders are given by academic staff in classes about the importance of academic honesty and about possible disciplinary actions that may be taken in connection with non-compliance.

- 3.6.6 The University continues to seek ways of developing a student culture that encompasses academic integrity and honesty. The University places strong emphasis on academic honesty and students committing plagiarism and/or engaging in other kinds of dishonesty practices will be penalised, as stipulated in the University's academic regulations.
- 3.6.7 In Section 5 of the [Regulations Governing University Examinations and Course Work](#), it is specified that if a student attempts to gain an advantage in the assessment of his/her work by collusion, falsification of data, plagiarism, or any other form of dishonest practice, it will be regarded as a case of cheating.
- 3.6.8 For postgraduate programmes, it is specified that any staff member who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic misconduct will present the case to the Board of Examiners (BoE) concerned. The BoE will determine whether it is a case of academic misconduct and decide on the appropriate penalty, viz. zero mark will be given to that particular examination paper/piece of work and one demerit will be given to the student. The BoE concerned has the discretion to impose penalty on the student by revising downward the overall course grade for a serious case. The BoE will present a summary of academic misconduct cases to the PSC on an annual basis for onward submission to the Senate for noting.
- 3.6.9 A two-layer approach in handling plagiarism cases is implemented for undergraduate students, viz. differentiating between first-time and repeat offenders. A repeat offender will receive a heavier penalty, i.e. in addition to marking down by one grade for an unintentional offence or giving zero mark for an intentional offence, one demerit will be given to the student if the case is serious. The spirit of this approach is to educate students, not merely to penalise them, since the BoE concerned is expected to uncover the reasons behind the misconduct and to explain to the student the importance of academic integrity. All academic misconduct cases will be recorded with the Registry. The BoE will present a summary of academic misconduct cases to the AQAC on an annual basis for onward submission to the Senate for noting. More details are available from Section 5 of the Regulations.