

Quality Assurance Council releases Audit Report on sub-degree operations of Education University of Hong Kong

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) today (June 26) released the Audit Report on the sub-degree operations of the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK).

The Audit Report presents the findings on the quality of learning at the sub-degree providing unit (SDPU) of the EdUHK. The Chairman of the QAC, Mr Lincoln Leong, said, "The QAC is pleased that the Audit Panel concludes that the University's three sub-degree programmes, offered by the Department of Early Childhood Education (ECED) in its Faculty of Education and Human Development, are effectively integrated with the Department's degree provision, with clear pathways for sub-degree students to progress to higher levels of study. The sub-degree provision is fully aligned with the strategic priorities of the Department, the Faculty and the University, and it reflects the EdUHK's vision, mission and core values. There are effective governance structures and procedures for setting and maintaining academic standards. In addition, there is a consistent and comprehensive approach to quality assurance. The ECED systematically implements the University's approach in its monitoring of the quality of sub-degree programme delivery."

The QAC is pleased with the quality of educational provision at the SDPU of the EdUHK. The University's efforts in various areas are commended as positive features in the Audit Report. These include a comprehensive approach that leads to effective and tailored professional development of sub-degree programmes teaching staff; and the University's application and review of its comprehensive policy framework governing student learning assessment for sub-degree programmes.

The full report (with EdUHK's Institutional Response attached) has been uploaded to the website of the University Grants Committee (UGC) (www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/qac/about/term/publications/report.html). The QAC welcomes the EdUHK to keep the Council informed of its development in further enhancing student learning.

Background of the quality audit on sub-degree operations of EdUHK

The quality audit on the sub-degree operations of the EdUHK was undertaken by an Audit Panel appointed by the QAC. The Audit Panel was chaired by Professor Denis Wright, and members included Dr Ella Chan, Professor Mark Davies, Mr Ian Marshman and Professor Ricky Wong. The Panel reviewed the Institutional Submission, which was prepared by the EdUHK

following a period of self-study, and visited the EdUHK on October 30 and 31, 2018, to meet with staff and students. It also met with a number of external stakeholders, such as local employers and graduates of EdUHK sub-degree programmes.

Background of the QAC and its auditing activities

The QAC was established in April 2007 as a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under the aegis of the UGC. The UGC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the quality of the UGC-funded universities and their activities. In view of the institutional expansion of university activities and a growing public interest in quality issues, the QAC was established to assist the UGC in providing third-party oversight of the quality of the universities' educational provision. The QAC assists the UGC in assuring the quality of all programmes at the levels of sub-degree, first degree and above (however funded) offered in UGC-funded universities. The QAC fulfils this task primarily by undertaking periodic quality audits of the universities.

Auditing is an external quality assurance process that involves independent peer review by senior academics in the higher education sector. Its principal aims are to confirm that existing arrangements for quality assurance are fit for purpose, that the quality of provision is comparable to international best practices, that universities are committed to continuously improving the quality of their academic programmes, and that students are well taught and well supported so that they are able to achieve the expected academic standards.

Prior to 2016, the QAC's audit activities covered only first degree programmes and above. The first and second QAC audit cycles were completed in 2011 and 2016 respectively. In 2016, the UGC assumed the role of the overseeing body of the quality audits on the sub-degree operations of UGC-funded universities, with the involvement of QAC as the audit operator. The audit visits to universities in this cycle were conducted from late 2017 to early 2019.