The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**Quality Manual
(Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing
Education Programmes (SPCEPs))**

https://www.spcep.cuhk.edu.hk/quality-manual/

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THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Quality Manual (Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (SPCEPs))

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 7   Graduation Procedures and Standards

Chapter 8   Grievances, Appeals, and Ethics

List of Appendices

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Quality Manual (Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (SPCEPs))

List of Appendices

Chapter 6   QA System of Non-award-bearing Programmes

Chapter 7   Graduation Procedures and Standards

Chapter 8   Grievances, Appeals, and Ethics

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Quality Manual (Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (SPCEPs))

<u>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms</u>

AAPC	Administrative and Planning Committee
ADC	Admissions Committee
APC	Academic Planning Committee
ATS	Award Titles Scheme
CAGs	Cost Allocation Guidelines
CAT (I)	Credit Accumulation and Transfer (Institutional)
CID	Class Information Database
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Points Average
CLEAR	Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research
CTE	Course and Teaching Evaluation
CUHK	The Chinese University of Hong Kong; in this Manual, the term "*the University*" shall be used.
CUHK 2025	Strategic Plan 2021-2025
CUSCS	School of Continuing and Professional Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
CUSIS	Chinese University Student Information System
DSCCC	Divinity School of Chung Chi College
EDB	Education Bureau
FO	Finance Office
FTD-PCMC	Full-time Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee
FTD-PEB	Full-time Diploma Programme Examination Board
GC	Graduate Council
HDPCMC	Higher Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee
HDPEB	Higher Diploma Programme Examination Board
HKCAAVQ	Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications
HKIER	Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research
HKQF	Hong Kong Qualifications Framework
HKQR	Hong Kong Qualifications Register
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
ITSC	Information Technology Services Centre
JQRC	Joint Quality Review Committee
OBA	Outcomes-based Approach
PCE-PCMC	Professional and Continuing Education Programme Coordination and Management Committee
PCE-PEB	Professional and Continuing Education Programme Examination Board
PDC	Professional Development Course
Pg	Postgraduate
PPDC	Programme Planning and Development Committee
QA	Quality Assurance

QF	Qualifications Framework
SCTL	Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning
SDPUs	Sub-degree Providing Units
SPCEPs	Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes
Senate SPCEP	Senate Committee on Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes, as a replacement of the University Extension Board (UExB) with effect from the academic year 2017-18.
SSEQ	Sub-degree Student Experience Questionnaire
SSPUs	Self-financed Sub-degree Programme Units
TPg	Taught Postgraduate
T&L	Teaching and Learning
UEB	Undergraduate Examinations Board
UExB	University Extension Board, which has been de-established and replaced by the Senate SPCEP starting from the academic year 2017-18.
Ug	Undergraduate
UGC	University Grants Committee

Foreword

The *CUHK Strategic Plan 2021-2025* ("*CUHK 2025*") cherishes the University's vision of achieving excellence with purpose and responsibility, and seeking to forge a better future for all. One of the goals for "Education" in *CUHK 2025* is to "expand CUHK's leading role and positive impact on the professions and industry as well as the larger community through high-quality Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (SPCEPs)".

In addition to undergraduate (Ug) and postgraduate (Pg) studies, the SPCEP is an important sector in discharging the University's missions of lifelong education and social impact with more than 90,000 graduates to date.

With approval by the Senate, the Senate Committee on SPCEP ("Senate SPCEP") was established to actively assist in the planning, implementation, and quality enhancement of SPCEPs at an advanced level. The Senate SPCEP, composed of senior academics and administrative staff of the University, works together with the Ug and Pg sectors for the betterment of academic offerings.

This manual is one of the major vehicles to crystalize the quality assurance (QA) policies and guidelines through a set of continuously improving, robust and transparent QA mechanisms developed for the SPCEPs. It presents a long-established and consistent approach in the execution of QA mechanisms at all levels of the University.

The Senate SPCEP and its secretariat together with our internal and external stakeholders would seek continuous enhancement, with purpose and excellence, to bring positive outcomes that can serve the community as a whole. Your feedback is most valuable to us. Welcome to make your suggestions by email to us at spcep@cuhk.edu.hk.

Professor Poon Wai Yin
Chairperson
Senate Committee on Sub-degree,
Professional and Continuing Education Programmes
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. History, Mission and Vision

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is a self-governing institution founded in 1963 through incorporating, by Ordinance, three existing Colleges: New Asia, Chung Chi, and United (founded in 1949, 1951, and 1956 respectively). The introduction of the CUHK Ordinance in 1976 led to further streamlining of the University's operating structure. A fourth constituent College, Shaw College, was founded in 1986. To cater for the new four-year undergraduate (Ug) curriculum introduced in 2012, five more Colleges were established: Morningside, S.H. Ho (both in 2006), C.W. Chu, Wu Yee Sun, and Lee Woo Sing (all in 2007), adding to a total of nine constituent Colleges in the University.

The University's mission is to assist in the preservation, creation, application and dissemination of knowledge by teaching, research and public service in a comprehensive range of disciplines, thereby serving the needs, and enhancing the well-being, of the citizens of Hong Kong, China as a whole, and the wider world community.

The University's vision is to be acknowledged locally, nationally, and internationally as a first-class comprehensive research university, whose bilingual and multicultural dimensions of student education, scholarly output and contribution to the community consistently meet standards of excellence. The University's Strategic Plan[1] spells out its long-term goals and strategies.

Established in 1965 at first known as the Department of Extramural Studies, the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUSCS) bears the mission of providing quality continuing professional education programmes and services to meet the changing needs of society.

The eighties in the last century marked a beginning of rapid economic development of Hong Kong. In pursuit of self-enrichment and career advancement in a vibrant human resources market, professional and continuing education programmes offered by the University were very much sought after. Academic and research units gradually played a role in the offering of quality programmes.

"Diversity and Flexibility" of tertiary education is a key message for education in the *Policy Address 2000*, which also states an objective that "within ten years, 60% of our senior secondary school leavers will receive tertiary education". In support of this Government's initiative, full-time sub-degree programmes were introduced by the University through the CUSCS and the then community college.

As the Government's target has been exceedingly fulfilled, the University takes action to consolidate the portfolio of offerings with a framework that supports the long-term development of the Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (SPCEPs).

1.2. CUHK Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Pursuant to the official release of *CUHK Strategic Plan 2016-2020* in the spring of 2016, the Strategic Goal Statements for SPCEPs with close reference to the strategic theme of "Education" were deliberated and adopted in 2017.

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[1] http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/strategicplan/cuhk2025/

The provision of top-notch programmes for professionals, thereby serving the needs of the community while maintaining a robust Quality Assurance (QA) mechanism and network with professional bodies has been the strategic goal of SPCEPs. The education provider/programme offering units should pursue the following objectives in mind:

A. Programmes in alignment with *CUHK Strategic Plan 2016-2020.*

B. Due recognition by external QA benchmarks (e.g. Hong Kong Qualifications Framework [2] (HKQF)), QA and professional bodies in order to make contributions to the SPCEP sector, relevant industries and Hong Kong society as a responsible education provider.

C. Continuous enhancement of learner-centred quality programmes underpinned by a robust QA mechanism that provides students with positive learning experience to serve the professional development of learners and participants.

1.3.   CUHK Strategic Plan 2021-2025 ("CUHK 2025")

One of the goals for "Education" is to "expand CUHK's leading role and positive impact on the professions and industry as well as the larger community through high-quality SPCEPs".

To meet the challenges of tomorrow, it is an opportune time for the education provider/programme offering units to plan or review their programme offerings in alignment with *CUHK 2025*, in addition to the Strategic Goal Statements of SPCEPs.

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[2] https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/home/index.html

Chapter 2   Governance Structure of the University

2.1.   An Overall Structure for Academic QA of the University

The University is governed by the Council; its chief academic and administrative officer is the Vice-Chancellor and President, who is responsible to the Council for the overall quality and academic standards of the University's provision.

The Senate chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and President is the body that oversees education and research. It is served by several bodies and among others, the Senate Academic Planning Committee (APC) as the Senate's executive committee, the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning (SCTL), the Undergraduate Examinations Board (UEB), and the Graduate Council (GC).

The University has clear and transparent QA mechanisms for teaching and learning (T&L). The SCTL, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), oversees all matters related to T&L. With effect from the academic year 2017-18, the Senate Committee on Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (Senate SPCEP[3]) was established to oversee the SPCEPs with an expanded remit and enhanced QA role. Major QA policies for SPCEPs are approved by the Senate SPCEP.

Same as the Ug and postgraduate (Pg) programmes, the introduction of new SPCEPs is endorsed by the Senate APC and approved by the Senate.

2.2.   The Historical Role of the UExB and its Relationship with the University

The UExB was set up in 2003 as approved by the Administrative and Planning Committee (AAPC) to oversee the granting of sub-degree, diploma and certificate qualifications. The UExB together with its secretariat was the final authority for the day-to-day operations of the business of the UExB and responsible to the Vice-Chancellor and President through the Chairman of the UExB.

The establishment of the UExB and its terms of reference were quoted in the *Good Practices in Quality Assurance: A Handbook for the Sub-degree Sector*, a joint publication in 2009 by the Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC), the Education Bureau (EDB) and the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). To better reflect the enhanced QA functions of the UExB and the demise of the community college, the revised composition and terms of reference of the UExB were approved by the AAPC in 2015.

2.3.   The Senate SPCEP

After the cessation of operation of the JQRC, JQRC's QA functions were taken up by the UExB. The remit of the UExB from HKQF Levels 1 to 4 limited the University's long-term development of professional and continuing education programmes at a more sophisticated and advanced level. Due consideration was given into the unattended domain of the Award Titles Scheme (ATS) under the HKQF. It was finally decided in 2017 to de-establish the UExB and establish a new Senate SPCEP led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education). Starting from the academic year 2017-18, the Senate SPCEP endorses for approval by the Senate the SPCEPs within HKQF Levels 1-6, and formulates and keeps under review

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[3] The Senate SPCEP has taken up the responsibilities of the University Extension Board (UExB) and thus this term is used in this manual interchangeably with "the UExB".

strategies for the offering of SPCEPs. The composition and terms of references are in <u>Appendix 2-1</u>.

Chapter 3   Governance Structure of Sub-degree Providing Units (SDPUs)

3.1.   Self-financed Sub-degree Programme Units (SSPUs) and SDPUs

"SSPUs" is a term formerly adopted by the JQRC in its last Institutional Review in 2008. At that time, "SSPUs" was defined as the university extension units, research institutes, faculty, school, department and the then community college that offered self-financed sub-degree programmes.

The term "SDPU" was introduced in the *Audit Manual: Sub-degree Operations of University Grants Committee-funded Universities (Quality Assurance Council, 2017).* It refers to all organisational units offering sub-degree level programmes within University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities. From a QA perspective, it refers to a sizeable unit with the responsibility of quality assuring the portfolio of programme offerings for the SPCEPs under the University.

3.2.   Role of SDPU

For CUHK, a SDPU can be either a UGC-funded academic faculty or a wholly self-financed university extension unit such as the CUSCS, assuming a supervisory role in overseeing the activities of its affiliated units.

3.3.   Internal Governance Structure of the SDPUs

The eight Faculties of the University are the Faculty of Arts, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Medicine, Law, Science and Social Science offering programmes approved by the Senate mainly at HKQF Levels 5-7. Some Faculties are offering SPCEPs for a niche segment.

A Faculty is governed by a Board of Faculty, i.e. a statutory body of the University and is governed by paragraph 7 of Statute 15 of the University Statutes (Appendix 3-1). Faculty Boards report to the Senate whereas Faculty Deans report to the Provost. A Faculty Board can delegate its supervisory role to a Board or a Committee underneath in overseeing the professional and continuing education programmes and receive regular reports as monitoring of their activities. The governing structure of Faculties is shown in Appendix 3-2.

Each affiliated unit is governed by a department board, school board, management committee or equivalent. Members are academics with expertise in a wide range of academic disciplines. An example of the duties and functions of the Boards of Departments is in Appendix 3-3.

To date, some affiliated units under the Faculty of Arts, Education, Medicine, and Social Science are engaged in the provision of quality self-financed professional programmes to satisfy societal needs. Affiliated units include schools, e.g. The Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care under the Faculty of Medicine; research institutes, e.g. The Hong Kong Institute of Educational Research (HKIER) under the Faculty of Education; departments, e.g. Department of Social Work under the Faculty of Social Science; and

centres, e.g. Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies, Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages under the Faculty of Arts.

The CUSCS is a wholly self-financed university extension unit, with its programmes quality assured by the Academic Board of the CUSCS with several standing committees. Details are covered in Section 3.4.

The Academic Board of the CUSCS reports to the Senate SPCEP (formerly the UExB) whereas the Director of the CUSCS reports to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education). The governance structure of the CUSCS is shown in Appendix 3-4.

3.4.   Quality Assurance Manual of the CUSCS

A total of eight standing committees underpin the Academic Board of CUSCS in discharging the T&L activities. They include the Programme Planning and Development Committee (PPDC), Higher Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee (HDPCMC), Higher Diploma Programme Examination Board (HDPEB), Full-time Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee (FTD-PCMC), Full-time Diploma Programme Examination Board (FTD-PEB), Professional and Continuing Education Programme Coordination and Management Committee (PCE-PCMC), Professional and Continuing Education Programme Examination Board (PCE-PEB) and Admissions Committee (ADC).

The Full-time Programme Team and the Professional and Continuing Education Programme Team take charge of the delivery of academic programmes and courses, and the implementation of QA procedures.

In view of the diversity of its portfolio of SPCEP offerings, CUSCS developed a *Quality Assurance Manual* <http://cuscs.hk/cuscs/qa/QAmanual.pdf> to ensure and enhance the standard and delivery quality of its academic programmes and courses.

Chapter 4   Award-bearing and Non-award-bearing Programmes

4.1.   Award-bearing Programmes and Non-award-bearing Programmes

SPCEPs leading to formal CUHK qualifications with approval by the Senate are classified as "award-bearing programmes". The other educational and professional courses, usually of a much shorter duration and not leading to formal CUHK qualifications, are classified as "non-award-bearing programmes".

*4.2.   Classification of Types of Award-bearing Programmes
           within the University: the Past and the Present*

"SPCEPs" refers to award-bearing programmes at the levels of Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Higher Diploma, etc. The University's classification and QA framework developed since 2005 including the criteria of contact hours, admission requirements, assessment, approval of graduate list and certification is in Appendix 4-1.

With the official launch of the HKQF and its public interface, the Hong Kong Qualifications Register (HKQR) [4] , by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in mid-2008, the introduction of SPCEPs, as far as applicable, should make reference to the external requirements of the HKQF and the HKQR for the public interest's sake. The ATS and Qualifications Framework (QF) credit policy introduced by the HKSAR Government effective from 2016 further promotes the transparency and credibility of the framework.

4.3.   Classification of Award-bearing Programmes according to the HKQF

The ATS and QF credit policy guides the choice of award titles for HKQF Levels 1-7 (Appendix 4-2). It also prescribes that all programmes at HKQF Levels 1-4 must indicate their QF credits on the HKQR and that a Diploma must carry a learning size of at least 60 QF credits. The definition and general principles governing QF credit are available in the *Operational Guidelines on Use of Credit* published by the EDB of the HKSAR Government[5].

At present, all SPCEPs of CUHK placed onto the HKQR are in full compliance with the ATS and QF credit policy.

In the last *CUHK Strategic Plan 2016-2020*, one of the goals under the strategic theme "Education" is "To serve the needs and demands of the community for lifelong education and continuing development" while one of the strategies is to "Redefine the role of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies to serve the needs of the ageing population and second career trends in Hong Kong."

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[4] http://www.hkqr.gov.hk/HKQRPRD/web/hkqr-en/
[5] https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/KeyFeatures/credit/index.html

In the new *CUHK 2025*, the following three strategies (S1-S3) have been formulated to achieve the goal of expanding CUHK's leading role and positive impact on the professions and industry as well as the larger community through high-quality SPCEPs.

- S1: Effective use of technology to support development
- S2: Strengthen the micro-credential approach
- S3: CUSCS adopts global values and vision

Chapter 5   QA System of Award-bearing Programmes

5.1.   Introduction and Approval of Programmes

All SPCEPs should follow the established procedures governing the introduction and approval of SPCEPs. Upon receipt of the final approval by the Senate, the SPCEPs can start the enrolment of students. Core information with relevance to the academic quality of the potential programmes should be given in the programme proposals. In planning new programmes, the SDPUs should use the template Proposal for Introduction of New Self-financed Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programme (SPCEP) and make reference to the detailed guidelines for the formal submission of programme proposals (Appendix 5-1).

Before submitting the programme proposals to the Senate SPCEP for approval by the Senate, the SDPUs must obtain endorsement or approval from their respective Faculty Boards, i.e. the governing bodies of the SDPUs.

At the CUSCS, it is the Academic Board of the CUSCS to vet and endorse the offering of programmes. Before these programmes of a HKQF level are to be vetted and endorsed by the Senate SPCEP, they are required to undergo a QA procedure named Faculty Consultation coordinated by the Secretariat of the Senate SPCEP at the University level. The proformas related to this QA process are in Appendix 5-2.

The flowcharts on the procedures for introducing new SPCEPs offered by Faculties and the CUSCS are in Appendix 5-3 and Appendix 5-4 respectively.

5.1.1.   Programme and Award Titles

All programme and award titles should fall within the range of titles or qualifications permitted by the University, and fulfill the requirements of the ATS under the HKQF in alignment with the HKQF. Strong justification to exclude from placing onto HKQR is required for approval by the Senate SPCEP. As a standard practice across the University, the award title should fully correspond with its programme title. The only difference lies in the inclusion of the word "Programme" in the programme title[6].

5.1.2.   Evidence of Demand

The SDPUs should align the development of programmes with their respective academic priorities and policies, as well as the priorities identified in the Strategic Goal Statements for SPCEPs under Section 1.2. Risk factors including the viability and sustainability of the potential programmes are taken into serious consideration at the programme development stage.

Proposals for launching new SPCEPs must be supported by strong evidence of demand. A brief description of such demand with evidence must be given in the programme proposal.

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[6] If the programme title is "Certificate Programme in ABC (ABC 證書課程)", the corresponding award title should be "Certificate in ABC (ABC 證書)".

5.1.3. Admission Requirements

The SDPUs should ensure that the admission requirements of the new programmes adhere to the prescribed standards of the University (Appendix 4-1). Any deviance from these admission standards must be supported with strong justifications in the programme proposals.

After the programme proposals are approved by the Senate, the SDPUs should ensure that the admission requirements of Senate approved programmes are consistently upheld. If professional accreditation is critical to the official recognition by professional bodies, the SDPUs must ensure that their SPCEPs are in strict compliance with the requirements of the professional bodies concerned.

With regard to the full-time Higher Diploma programmes, the CUSCS must abide by the admission requirements of the Updated Revised Common Descriptors for Associate Degree and Higher Diploma Programmes as promulgated by the EDB of the HKSAR Government (Appendix 5-5).

If special considerations are granted to students with exceptionable capabilities other than the admission requirements or other acceptable equivalent qualifications specified by the Higher Diploma programmes, each special admission case must be submitted for consideration of approval by the Special Admission Task Force under the Senate SPCEP or its delegated authority before the student concerned is admitted. Key information such as the applicant's academic qualifications and other areas of achievements should be provided in the Proforma for Special Admission to Higher Diploma Programme for final decision (Appendix 5-6).

5.1.4. Programme Background and Objectives

A well-designed programme involves different stages of development within the SDPUs, resulting in a number of focused objectives to be achieved by the introduction of the new programme.

5.1.5. Expected Learning Outcomes

An outcomes-based approach (OBA), with a focus on student learning outcomes, is universally adopted across the University in its T&L activities. It is of paramount importance that the SDPUs must devise and articulate the expected learning outcomes of the new SPCEPs with reference to the needs of the community and the workforce, as well as external benchmarks such as the Generic Level Descriptors under the HKQF (Appendix 5-7) or the prevailing standards adopted by similar programmes in the HKSAR.

The achievement of expected learning outcomes is expressed through other key aspects of the SPCEPs such as the curriculum design, student assessment, etc.

5.1.6. Programme Content and Hours

The programme content is designed with an aim to achieve the expected learning outcomes of the programme. There must be an alignment between the learning outcomes at programme level and the learning outcomes at course level. Every course must make partial or integrated contributions to the programme intended learning outcomes. A template on

Course by Learning Outcomes Matrix should be submitted to illustrate the alignment (Appendix 5-8).

In planning a new course, the SDPUs should provide essential course information such as course content, learning outcomes, and learning activities in the template Course Description Form (Appendix 5-9) as a formal submission of the course documents.

The contact hours of all SPCEPs must comply with the University's framework (Appendix 4-1). SPCEPs in alignment with the HKQF must also comply with the requirements of ATS and QF credits.

5.1.7. Teaching Resources

The SDPUs must appoint a Programme Director to oversee the academic and teaching quality of the programme.

The SDPUs must deploy teaching staff with an appropriate level of qualifications, professional experience and competence to deliver the programmes. All recruitment processes must be in line with the human resources policies and practices of the University and the SDPUs. Information critical to the quality of student learning experience such as the sources of teaching staff, the class venue or other learning resources provided by the joint organizers when applicable, etc. are to be given in the programme proposals. The estimated teaching staff cost, the percentage of the total staff cost over total expenditure, as well as the classroom rental expenses of the programme must be given in the proposed budget to the Finance Office (Appendix 5-10). Details are covered in Section 5.1.12.

In support of professional development and training, teaching staff at the rank of Assistant Professor or below within their first contract have to complete a package of seminars and workshops offered by the Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR), which are termed the "Professional Development Course" (PDC). It is expected that SDPUs would provide professional development activities, e.g. orientation and training, to the teaching staff as appropriate.

5.1.8. Assessment Methods

The SDPUs must follow their respective academic policies governing the extent and nature of student assessment. Assessment methods must be designed in alignment with the programme learning outcomes to gauge the progress of students in achieving the expected learning outcomes of the programmes. Details of the assessment policy of SPCEPs are in Appendix 5-11.

The final grades awarded to students in a course should reflect their individual achievements pegged or criterion-referenced to the course learning outcomes, in which the course outline should specify the criteria for the various grades. Measures to safeguard against grade inflation should be firmly in place.

The SDPUs must ensure that the grading is fair and consistent. In case of grade appeals, cheating or plagiarism, the SDPUs must follow their respective policies. It must be emphasized that there should be zero tolerance towards academic dishonesty including plagiarism. On the other hand, there is a policy for students to consult the teacher(s)/assessment panel or examination board concerned within a prescribed week(s) of

the release of academic results for relevant term should there be a query on the grade given for any courses.

5.1.9. Student Support and Participation

Student support services catering to the needs of SPCEP students, especially full-time Higher Diploma students, are provided by the SDPUs, i.e. the CUSCS, in the offering of Higher Diploma programmes. With a view to preparing graduates of Higher Diploma students for further studies and initial employment at the para-professional level, the CUSCS is obliged to provide holistic education through a suite of diversified activities and learning opportunities for their growth and development.

5.1.10. Maximum Study Period

In line with the policy that all programmes are governed by a maximum study period, all SPCEPs shall stipulate a minimum and a maximum study period and that SPCEP students shall have fulfilled the graduation requirements for graduation within the maximum study period, unless otherwise approved by the governing boards of the programme offering units and/or SDPUs and noted by Senate SPCEP for scrutiny and necessary action as appropriate.

At the operational level, a student who has not fulfilled all requirements for graduation beyond the maximum study period shall be discontinued by and from the programme concerned without receiving a graduate certificate. On the other hand, a student who has fulfilled all requirements for graduation within the maximum study period shall be recommended for graduation by the programme offering units/ SDPUs concerned within one year after the student has fulfilled all requirements for graduation.

Details of the policy on maximum study period are in Appendix 5-12.

5.1.11. Graduation Requirements

A set of graduation requirements for SPCEPs is prescribed to monitor the programme quality at exit level. The graduation requirements, including the minimum percentage of attendance, as well as the minimum level of achievements in terms of Cumulative Grade Points Average (CGPA), grade or even raw score, are the standards that the students must have attained for the purpose of graduation.

These graduation requirements are also the major check points for monitoring the University's graduation standards. Details are covered in Chapter 7.

5.1.12. Tuition Fees and Proposed Budget

The SDPUs must set a reasonable level of tuition fees to reflect the operational cost of the SPCEPs. The template Budget Proposal for New Self-financed Sub-degree Programmes (i.e. Category 2 Programme[7]) provides financial guidance to the new programme in resources management from both the accounting and educational perspectives (Appendix 5-10). The proposed budget includes items such as the income budget, staff cost budget,

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[7] Category 2 programmes refer to self-financed SPCEPs leading to award titles comparable to the HKQF Levels 1-6, which are offered by Faculties, Departments, research institutes/ centres and extension offices, endorsed by the Senate SPCEP (replacing UExB with effect from August 1, 2017) and approved by the Senate.

non-staff cost budget, etc., which should be submitted to the Finance Office for approval before inclusion into the programme proposal for submission to the Senate SPCEP.

When the academic merits of the proposed SPCEPs are approved by the Senate, the SDPUs are responsible for working out the financial arrangements with the Director of Finance before the formal offering of the SPCEPs.

5.1.13. *Projected Student Intake*

The SDPUs must project the student intake with close reference to their physical and teaching resources. A reasonable teacher-to-student ratio must be maintained for all SPCEPs.

5.1.14. *Programme Monitoring*

The SDPUs must continuously monitor the programme quality to ensure that the programme learning outcomes can be achieved at the point of graduation. Opinions from external sources such as external examiners or external advisors should be gathered for the SPCEPs. An evaluation must be conducted to collect students' feedback about the courses they take and the teachers of the courses. The University's standardized template Course and Teaching Evaluation (CTE) Questionnaire is used to collect students' feedback at course level (Appendix 5-13). Programmes are expected to take follow up actions with the CTE findings for making continuous enhancements. It is recommended that the SDPUs conduct an annual programme review to reflect upon the T&L activities of the SPCEPs with reference to the findings of the CTE and also the *Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review: III. Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes* (Appendix 5-14). Details of the *Integrated Framework* for the SPCEPs are covered in Section 5.2.1.

5.1.15. *Articulation Route/Recognition by Professional Body*

As far as applicable, the SDPUs should map out the articulation route or professional recognition/accreditation for the SPCEPs on offer. If articulation route or professional recognition/accreditation is factored in, the SDPUs must keep up with the current and future developments of the external institutions or professional bodies concerned.

For SPCEPs with course and/or unit exemption arrangement with CUHK taught postgraduate (TPg) programmes, they should consult and observe the Graduate School's Policy on Course and Unit Exemptions for Postgraduate Student and provide relevant information in the template Proposal for Introduction of New Self-financed Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programme (SPCEP) (Appendix 5-1).

5.1.16. *Employment Opportunity*

The curriculum of new SPCEPs in full-time mode, in particular Higher Diploma programmes, is mainly designed for preparing students for employment at para-professional level in future. The current and future needs of the community and the workforce must be factored in.

The curriculum of new SPCEPs in part-time mode should regularly be updated with the latest employment trend and knowledge in the field, so that the employability of graduates can be enhanced.

5.1.17. *HKQF Level and Credits*

In planning new SPCEPs, the programmes to be offered by the SDPUs with a designated HKQF level should fulfill the prescribed requirements of the HKQF, including the ATS (Appendix 4-2). A set of templates developed by the HKCAAVQ and the Senate SPCEP (Appendix 5-15) can be used by the SDPUs to facilitate the assignment of HKQF level and QF credits.

A Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) policy for SPCEPs at the institutional level, i.e. CAT(I), is in Appendix 5-16.

5.2. *Monitoring of Programmes at University Level*

5.2.1. *Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review: III. Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (SPCEP) and Meta-analysis of Programme Review Reports by CLEAR*

All SPCEPs, regardless of their HKQF levels, are under the *Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review: III. Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes* (Appendix 5-14). The *Integrated Framework* for the SPCEPs serves as the QA framework for T&L of the University in governing the SPCEPs.

As a framework of review at course level, all courses must be regularly reviewed by the teachers concerned and their respective programme committees. At the programme level, all SPCEPs at HKQF Levels 4-6 must be reviewed by a programme review panel on a regular cycle as determined by the Senate SPCEP. For the SPCEPs at HKQF Levels 1-3, their governing boards are responsible for deciding the review cycle of the SPCEPs. A set of guidelines and checklist was designed to assist the SDPUs (Appendix 5-17). The Senate SPCEP considers and reviews the programme review documents. Furthermore, the Senate SPCEP, with the assistance of the CLEAR, conducts a meta-analysis of all the programme review documents for identification and sharing of good practices from a macro perspective.

5.2.2. *Sub-degree Student Experience Questionnaire (SSEQ) for full-time Higher Diploma at HKQF Level 4 and Trend Analysis by CLEAR*

Given that the Higher Diploma is a "worthwhile standalone sub-degree qualification" preparing students for further studies and initial employment at the para-professional level, an additional exit survey at the University level entitled SSEQ is conducted with assistance by the CLEAR among all graduating students of full-time Higher Diploma programmes at HKQF Level 4 (Appendix 5-18). Findings of the SSEQ, with a trend analysis of longitudinal data, are channeled back to the programmes concerned, the CUSCS, and the Senate SPCEP for following through.

5.2.3. *Committee on Re-approval of Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (HKQF Levels 4-6)*

A programme revalidation mechanism is well in place at the University level. All self-financed TPg programmes approved by the Senate and SPCEPs pitched at HKQF Levels 4-6 will have a validity of six years. Re-approval has to be sought through the Committee on Re-approval of Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (Appendix 5-19), without which the programmes may be put on probation or be directed by the Senate to cease admission. The SDPUs must provide the QA and financial indicators of the

programme in the template Key Statistics for the Committee on Re-approval of Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes and also a self-reflection on the pertinent issues related to enhancing the quality of the programme (Appendix 5-20).

A flowchart illustrating the re-approval work cycle is in Appendix 5-21.

5.3.   Revision of Programmes

It is necessary for the SDPUs to review their SPCEPs against the feedback from students, teachers, alumni, or other external sources. It is also necessary for the SDPUs to make regular changes in the curriculum of SPCEPs to maintain currency.

When initiating a revision of programmes, the SDPUs should list the details of their proposed revisions with rationales in the Proforma for Major/Minor Revisions for the formal submission of programme revisions (Appendix 5-22). Any changes in terms of programme title, reduction in programme hours, programme's overall objectives, the core courses, or half or more of the elective courses are considered major revisions. The principles on the definitions of major and minor revisions are available in Appendix 5-22.

CUSCS programmes at HKQF Levels 4-6 must undergo the Faculty Consultation process when introducing major changes of curriculum for each programme or across a number of programmes (Appendix 5-23).

Same as the approval procedures for new programme proposals, all SPCEPs must have their programme revision proposals submitted to their respective governing boards for endorsement/approval before submitting the proposals for Senate SPCEP's endorsement for approval by the Senate.

The flowcharts illustrating the procedures for programme revisions initiated by Faculties and the CUSCS are in Appendix 5-24 and Appendix 5-25 respectively.

5.4.   Annual Reporting

For annual reporting to the Senate SPCEP, SDPUs must provide the class information, including key QA data, of their Category 2[7] programme(s) to the Non-CUSIS Class Information Database (CID)[8].

A template for Collection of Non-CUSIS Class Information on Category 2 Self-Financed Programmes is in Appendix 5-26.

5.5.   Phasing out of Programmes

The SDPUs must review their offerings of SPCEPs from time to time to determine their continuity and sustainability. If the demand due to technological development or societal changes has been completely satisfied, the SDPUs can consider initiating a phasing out of the SPCEPs. The proposed phasing out plan of the SPCEPs, as endorsed/approved by their respective governing boards, must be submitted to the Senate SPCEP for endorsement for approval by the Senate.

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[8] A joint initiative developed by the Finance Office (FO), Information Technology Services Centre (ITSC), and the Secretariat of the Senate SPCEP for better overseeing the quality of SPCEPs with reference to the Cost Allocation Guidelines (CAGs).

A flowchart illustrating the procedures for the phasing out of programmes is in <u>Appendix 5-27</u>.

Chapter 6   QA System of Non-award-bearing Programmes

6.1.   QA System of Non-award-bearing Programmes

A robust QA system is in place for all types of programmes offered under the name of the University, including Ug and Pg programmes, the award-bearing SPCEPs (Category 2 programmes[7]), as well as the non-award-bearing (Category 3[9]) programmes.

Non-award-bearing (Category 3) programmes are self-financed educational and professional training courses usually of a much shorter duration that will not lead to CUHK qualifications.

Non-award-bearing programmes are quality assured by the internal QA system of their respective offering units or governing boards. Upon completion of the non-award-bearing programmes, participants may be given a certificate, which are broadly divided into two types: (i) Certificate of Completion (with assessment) and (ii) Certificate of Attendance (with attendance only).

With regard to the approval process for non-award-bearing (Category 3) programmes, the offering units must obtain approval from their respective governing boards. Governing boards refer to the Faculty Board or the CUSCS Academic Board or any governing board/management committee with a delegated authority given by its Faculty Board or the CUSCS Academic Board.

Essential data of non-award-bearing (Category 3) programmes are collected at different levels of the University for monitoring through the Non-CUSIS CID[8] by the Senate SPCEP. A summary of the collected data is scrutinized by the Senate SPCEP for monitoring the key performance indicators such as programme number, student number and Full-time Equivalent (FTE) number. Furthermore, an overall report at SDPU level on the offerings of Category 3 programmes is submitted to the Head(s) of SDPU(s) concerned and the Senate SPCEP for review and comment when necessary.

A flowchart illustrating the reporting procedures is in <u>Appendix 6-1</u> while a template for Collection of Non-CUSIS Class Information on Category 3 Self-Financed Programmes is in <u>Appendix 6-2</u>.

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[9] Category 3 programmes refer to non-award-bearing self-financed programmes/ courses which are offered by Faculties, Departments, research institutes/ centres and extension offices, but do not require endorsement by the Senate SPCEP (replacing UExB with effect from August 1, 2017) or approval by the Senate. With effect from the academic year 2013-14, teaching programmes which are offered in the modes of courses, seminars, training workshops, symposia and the like are also classified under this category.

Chapter 7   Graduation Procedures and Standards

7.1.   Role of the Senate SPCEP

In accordance with its terms of reference, the Senate SPCEP is responsible for approving the examination results of all SPCEPs leading to CUHK qualifications on behalf of the Senate.

7.2.   Monitoring of Exit Standards

The graduate lists of SPCEPs are recommended by the SDPUs or their respective programme offering units for approval by the Senate SPCEP at the point of graduation. A clear set of criteria underpinning the exit standards at programme level is available. Measures to safeguard against the risk of grade inflation are in place at course level.

Capturing the overall check points of graduation standard, the template Graduate List Proforma is used for the formal submission of graduate lists to the Senate SPCEP (Appendix 7-1). Information on the "Year of Admission" of each graduate and the "Rolling Admission Figures" of each cohort is required for the monitoring of possible grade inflation by the Senate SPCEP while information on "No. of Students Who Discontinued Their Studies", "No. of Students Remaining in the Programme within the Maximum Study Period" and "No. of Students Remaining in the Programme beyond the Maximum Study" of each cohort is required for implementing the policy on maximum study period (Appendix 5-12).

Criterion-referenced assessment is adopted. All courses and programmes should follow their respective assessment rubrics for grading and assessment. If Distinctions and/or Merits are granted, the SDPUs should refer to the Guidelines on the Awards of Distinction and Merit for SPCEPs (Appendix 7-2).

In the case of Higher Diploma programmes, a report on the data related to the distribution of Distinctions and Merits should be prepared for submission to the Senate SPCEP on an annual basis (Appendix 7-3). The data would underpin the Senate SPCEP's monitoring of exit standards.

For programmes at certificate and diploma level, a Biennial Report on the Distribution of Distinctions and Merits is also compiled by the Secretariat of the Senate SPCEP (formerly the Secretariat of the UExB) for the Senate SPCEP to gauge possible grade inflation and identify good practices (Appendix 7-4).

7.3.   Centralized Certification Services

All certificates of award-bearing programmes are issued at the Registry of the University. The Secretariat of the Senate SPCEP at the Registry of the University provides centralized certification service for students of all SPCEPs leading to CUHK qualifications. Each graduate certificate is printed with a unique alphanumeric code on its back with the same University's logo in the front page.

There is a prescribed format and usage of wordings that can be printed on the graduate certificates (Appendix 7-5).

Graduate certificates for programmes at HKQF Levels 4-6 contain the signatories of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, i.e. Chairperson of the Senate SPCEP, the Registrar, as well as the Head(s) of SDPU(s) concerned or the Director of Divinity School of Chung Chi College

(DSCCC)[10]. On the other hand, graduate certificates at HKQF Levels 1-3 contain the signator(ies) of the Head(s) of SDPU(s) concerned or the Director of DSCCC[10].

Each graduate certificate is a unique document and no duplicate copy will be issued.

Replacement certificate in case of loss or damage of an original certificate can be issued through the submission of application by the programme offering unit to the Secretariat of the Senate SPCEP. The procedures for the application for replacement of certificate are in Appendix 7-6.

7.4.   Standardized Guidelines for Non-award-bearing Programmes

A Certificate of Attendance (Appendix 7-7) is issued to a participant having fulfilled the attendance requirements of a short-term educational and professional training course of the SDPUs. On the other hand, a Certificate of Completion (Appendix 7-8) is issued to a participant who has fulfilled both the assessment and attendance requirements of a short-term educational and professional training course of the SDPUs.

Clear guidelines are developed on the issuance and printing of both the Certificate of Attendance and the Certificate of Completion (Appendix 7-9). The programme offering units are entrusted with the issuance of certificates for this category with reference to the established guidelines.

Essential data of non-award-bearing (Category 3[9]) programmes are collected at different levels of the University for monitoring through the Non-CUSIS CID[8] by the Senate SPCEP. The flowchart for reporting procedures and the relevant template are in Appendix 6-1 and Appendix 6-2 respectively.

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[10] For DSCCC programmes only.

Chapter 8   Grievances, Appeals, and Ethics

8.1.   Student Grievances and Complaints

The University is committed to addressing grievances and complaints promptly, and to help resolve them in a reasonable manner. A provision has therefore been established for students to report any irregularities in their course of study through lodging a formal complaint with the University, after which an independent investigation into the matter concerned will take place. Students lodging complaints should identify themselves properly (i.e. no anonymous complaints) and follow the steps stipulated in the *Procedures for Dealing with Student Complaints of Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes* (Appendix 8-1). The *Procedures* serve as a guide for students in pursuit of complaints and a framework for the University to handle student complaints. These *Procedures* are based on the principle that complaints received shall only be considered on matters of procedure that might have resulted in the complainant being unfairly treated.

8.2.   Appeals against Academic Results

Whilst ultimately there may be no appeal against an academic judgement, under certain circumstances students may still wish to appeal against their results, which are handled in the following manner.

Students who wish to appeal against their results in a particular course should first discuss the matter with the course teacher. Students still wishing to lodge an appeal afterwards should do so in writing to the assessment panel/ examination board concerned within two weeks of the grade release date. No grade appeal will be entertained thereafter.

8.3.   Ethics

Ethics for members of the University are detailed in the University websites. Some useful documents include:

- Policies and Regulations on copyright in CUHK Library[11]
- Policy on Intellectual Property[12]
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy[13]
- Policy Against Sexual Harassment[14]

8.4.   Whistleblowing Policy

The Whistleblowing Policy is established to enable staff, students and other relevant parties to report their concern, in good faith and on a strictly confidential basis, about perceived irregularities in the operation of the University and the activities undertaken by its staff members that fall outside the scope of existing University policies and procedures. Members of the University can be assured that they can report such perceived irregularities without fear of reprisal or retribution.

For further details, please refer to the policy document on the University's website[15].

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[11] https://www.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/research/copyright/guidelines/compliance
[12] https://www.orkts.cuhk.edu.hk/images/Policy/Policy_on_IP_2020.pdf
[13] https://www.dio.cuhk.edu.hk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/diversity-inclusion-policy-en4980.pdf
[14] http://policy-harass.cuhk.edu.hk/images/Content/Revised-Policy_Eng_Final_Clean.pdf
[15] https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/english/documents/whistleblowing-policy.pdf?20190306