

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

**Senate Committee on Language Enhancement:  
A report on its role and major tasks undertaken 2007-15**

Introduction

1. The Senate Committee on Language Enhancement (SCLE) was established in October 2007 to coordinate, review, improve and promote the policy on bilingual education at CUHK, to formulate and implement various language policies, and to promote and oversee language enhancement programmes at the University.

2. Since its inception, the SCLE has made substantive efforts with respect to the preparation and implementation of the Chinese and English language requirements for the four-year curriculum. As a university-wide language enhancement committee, it keeps under review all aspects of bilingual education at the University and language enhancement programmes in Chinese (Putonghua and Cantonese) and English, including the reviews and approval of courses related to the teaching of Chinese (Putonghua and Cantonese) and English at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Language Enhancement Framework

3. With the introduction of the four-year curriculum in 2012-13, a new three-tier language enhancement framework replaced the four-tier framework for the three-year curriculum. Tier One: Compulsory Intensive Programme in Putonghua, Cantonese and English (IPCE) for the three-year curriculum was abolished with its main elements incorporated in the Chinese and English language courses in the four-year curriculum, while Tier Two: Faculty Language Enhancement Programme (FLEP) was revamped to become Tier One: University Language Core Requirements for the four-year curriculum. Tier Three: Elective Language Proficiency Courses and Tier Four: College Language and Culture Enhancement and Independent Learning Centre Activities/Programmes for the three-year curriculum have become Tiers Two and Three respectively for the four-year curriculum.

Language Requirements for the Four-year Curriculum

4. Upon the reversion to a four-year normative curriculum, the Chinese and English language requirements have been strengthened with the number of units increased to 15 units, with 6 and 9 units for the Chinese and English language respectively. The 6-unit foundation Chinese language curriculum includes two 3-unit courses, *CHLT1100 University Chinese I* and *CHLT1200 University Chinese II*, normally to be taken in Years 1 and 2. The 9-unit mandatory English language courses include a 4-unit course in Year 1, a 3-unit course in Year 2 and a 2-unit course in Year 3. The first, *ELTU1001 Foundation English for University Studies*, is a foundation English language course for all University students, while the Year 2

and Year 3 courses are faculty-based discipline-specific courses.

5. The Committee discussed in detail a range of issues related to the Chinese and English language requirements for the four-year curriculum, including:

- (a) the curriculum
- (b) exemption policies
  - (i) exemption by attainment
  - (ii) exemption by equivalence
  - (ii) exemptions for admission for first-year-first-degree (FYFD) students with advanced standing
  - (iii) exemptions for admission for senior-year-place students funded by University Grants Committee
- (c) piloting arrangements
- (d) mechanism for ensuring value-addedness
- (e) assessment
- (f) development of eLearning
- (g) language requirements for Mainland students
- (h) Chinese language requirements for international students
- (i) cross-faculty arrangements for the Years Two and Three English language courses

6. The proposals for the Chinese and English language requirements for the four-year curriculum were approved by the Senate.

#### Monitoring of Language Proficiency

7. The Committee endorsed the proposals for monitoring of language proficiency for 2013 to 2017. Language assessment tests would be developed to monitor students' Chinese and English language proficiency.

#### Results of the Common English Proficiency Assessment Scheme (CEPAS)

8. The Committee reviewed the results of the Common English Proficiency Assessment Scheme (CEPAS) on an annual basis. The University Grants Committee (UGC) replaced the CEPAS with the provision of funding for collaborative projects on English and/or Chinese language enhancement/language learning beginning from the 2012-15 triennium. At the encouragement of the Committee, departments and language teaching units have launched efforts to join hands with other institution(s) on joint language enhancement projects under this new arrangement.

#### Results from the Entry Class Questionnaire

9. To better understand the background and needs of the students of the new curriculum, with a view to designing and providing timely and relevant support which will

facilitate their development, the Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR), in collaboration with the Colleges, the Office of University General Education (OGE) and the Office of Student Affairs (OSA), has administered a comprehensive “Entry Class Questionnaire (ECQ)” to Year 1 students regardless of admissions schemes since August 2012. The ECQ results provide an overview of how the entrants assess their own language in terms of the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in English, Putonghua and Cantonese (applicable to Mainland and international students).

#### Review of the College Language Enhancement (CLE) Programmes

10. The Committee reviewed the proposed future arrangements of the College Language Enhancement (CLE) Fund. The Committee agreed that the CLE Fund should continue to be allocated to the Colleges on the basis of the size of the College to support the operation of non-formal language enhancement programmes to complement the University’s formal language teaching. Starting from 2014-15, the CLE Fund was renamed College Language and Culture Enhancement (CLCE) Fund to incorporate cultural elements to enhance experiential learning as part of the internationalization strategy of the University. A holistic quality assurance framework was proposed to measure the effectiveness of the CLCE programmes.

#### Language Policy at the Postgraduate Level

11. In the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) audit of teaching and learning at CUHK in 2008, it was recommended that CUHK’s language policy at the postgraduate level be more clearly and concisely articulated. In light of the QAC’s recommendations and comments, a statement on the language policy at the postgraduate level was drafted and endorsed.

#### Caring for the Chinese Language and Promotion of Chinese Culture

12. The Committee endorsed the action steps to be taken in the caring for the Chinese language and the promotion of Chinese culture.

#### Language of Instruction

13. The Committee endorsed the action steps to be taken in the language of instruction. The faculty representatives were requested to communicate the guidelines to their respective faculties and departments.

#### Sub-Committees of the SCLE

14. The following SCLE Sub-Committees and Working Groups were set up in 2007-08 in preparation for the QAC Audit Visit in April 2008:

(a) Sub-Committee for Language Learning, and its three Working Groups:

- (i) Working Group on Language Enhancement Framework
- (ii) Working Group on QA Framework for Language Programmes
- (iii) Working Group on Approval of Language Programmes and Courses
- (b) Sub-Committee for Language of Instruction
- (c) Sub-Committee on Chinese as an Academic Language

15. To streamline the SCLE's operations, the three Sub-Committees and the three Working Groups were dissolved with effect from 2008-09.

16. A Sub-Committee on Language Courses and Programmes was established in November 2009 to review and approve all credit-bearing courses related to the teaching of Chinese (Putonghua and Cantonese) and English at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as special programmes that have broad impact on the teaching and learning of these languages at the University.

17. The Yale–China Chinese Language Centre Steering Committee (CLCSC) was established as a Sub-Committee of the SCLE in 2010-11 to replace the CLC Management Committee to provide advice on professional issues related to the CLC's operations and to serve as a coordinating body between the CLC and other relevant units of the University.

18. The Sub-Committee on Language Proficiency Monitoring was established in 2012-13 to replace the Sub-Committee on Language Courses and Programmes to deliberate on issues relating to the monitoring of language proficiency of students in the University.

19. The Committee set up a Task Force to Review the Recommendations of the Committee on Bilingualism in July 2014 to review the language standards of CUHK students and the effectiveness of bilingual education at CUHK.

#### Annual Reporting to the Senate

20. A report of the SCLE is submitted to the Senate annually for monitoring of the work undertaken by the committee during the year and its effectiveness.

#### Report on Language Enhancement Programmes

21. The University's report on language enhancement programmes is submitted to the UGC annually.