CUSCS

香港中文大學專業進修學院

School of Continuing and Professional Studies

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Quality Assurance Manual

(Abridged Version)

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCS) is a self-financing arm of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), pledging to provide quality academic programmes and professional training opportunities to meet the fast-changing learning needs and contribute to the human resource development of the community. It was established as the Department of Extramural Studies in 1965 and renamed as the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCS) in 2006. The School offers a wide range of full-time and part-time programmes and other general courses and professional development programmes to meet the diverse learning and training needs of a knowledge-based economy.

SCS strives to offer academic programmes and courses of good academic standard and quality, and has put in place and in operation thorough quality assurance (QA) mechanism and procedures to this end. As a part of CUHK, SCS reports to the Senate Committee on Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (Senate SPCEP) on essential academic and QA matters, and is required to comply with the QA policy and requirements of CUHK. In particular, SCS follows the Integrated Framework (IF) for Curriculum Development and Review: III. SPCEPs for the approval, monitoring, review, revision and re-approval of its sub-degree, professional and continuing education programmes. SCS has established its own internal academic management and committee structures to ensure effective and thorough implementation of QA policy and procedures.

Vision and Mission

SCS is committed to providing quality programmes and education opportunities to meet the needs for people's continuing education and professional development in Hong Kong.

Vision:
To be a global leader in university continuing education by enriching lives and transforming lifelong learning by keeping pace with learners' needs, seeking input from stakeholders to keep up with the changing learning demands and staying passionate to innovative leadership.

Mission:
To help learners, including young adults, working adults and the ageing learners, advance their learning, career and life goals.

Quality Assurance (QA) System and Manual

SCS is committed to assuring and enhancing the standard and delivery quality of its academic programmes and courses, and promoting a QA mentality across the School. This QA Manual is developed to provide staff members with the QA system and procedures governing the academic programmes and other activities of the School. It stipulates clearly the QA policy and mechanism, and the roles of different committees and parties in assuring the quality of academic programmes. This Manual, among other things, includes the principles and procedures for programme development and approval, programme delivery and monitoring of quality, programme review and revision, and programme re-approval. The QA system and procedures contained in this Manual have been approved by the Academic Board of SCS.

It is worth mentioning that QA is an evolving process and the related principles and procedures are under on-going review and revision in order to ensure the effectiveness and thorough implementation of a QA system which is in line with the development of the School, the QA

system of CUHK and other external QA bodies. This QA Manual will then be updated accordingly.

CUHK's Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review

In 2010, SCS adopted the Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review: III. Sub-degree Programmes, which is a part of the University's QA system developed by the then UExB together with the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning. The framework (Appendix 1.1) was further revised in April 2020 to cope with the needs of all sub-degree, professional and continuing education programmes. Under the new framework, in addition to programme approval and revision procedures, Academic Units are required to: (i) conduct course evaluation per offering; (ii) conduct course review regularly; and (iii) conduct self-evaluation as a basis for the programme review every four to six years for programmes pitched at QF Levels 4-6.

Qualifications Framework (QF) and Implementation of Award Titles and QF Credit Scheme

In May 2008, the seven-level cross-sector Qualifications Framework (QF) (Appendix 1.2) and the Qualifications Register (QR) were launched by the HKSAR government with an aim to clearly define the standards of qualifications, ensure their quality, and indicate the articulation ladders between the different levels of qualifications. Programmes to be placed on the QR must have their quality "assured" by an autonomous body.

Normally, full-time and part-time award-bearing programmes developed by SCS and approved by the Senate of CUHK will be pitched at a certain QF level in order to be placed under the Qualifications Register (QR) (Appendix 1.3). With effect from January 1, 2014 and January 1, 2016 respectively, all new and existing academic programmes are required to comply with the Award Titles Scheme (ATS) and QF Credit (QFC) requirements in order to be placed under the QR. To this end, SCS has compiled its own assignment and endorsement guidelines and procedures for the implementation of the ATS and QFC scheme.

In the following chapters, this QA Manual will cover topics on the structure of SCS's QA System, programme development and approval, programme delivery and monitoring, programme review, revision and re-approval, admissions, and assessment, grade approval and award.

Chapter 2 Structure of the Quality Assurance System

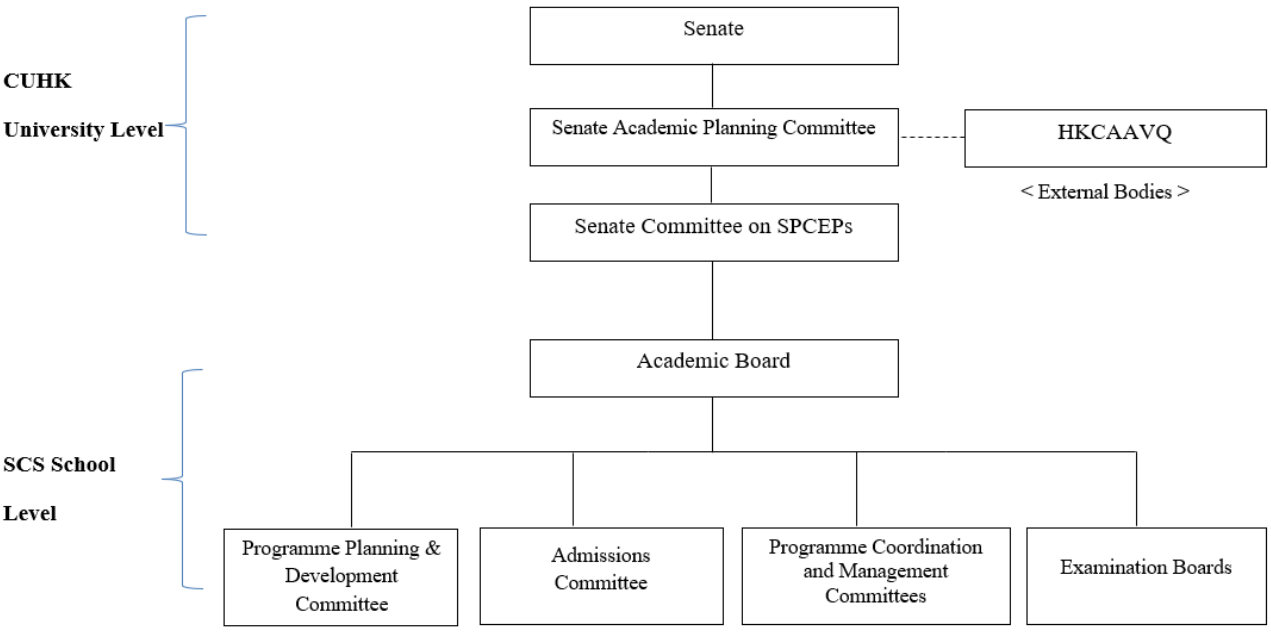
The Quality Assurance System at SCS

SCS has put in place and in operation a sound QA system with thorough procedures and guidelines to assure the standard of its academic programmes and activities in meeting the changing learning and human development needs of the community. Specifically, as all the academic awards are conferred by CUHK, SCS reports to the Senate SPCEP on all academic and QA matters, and is required to comply with CUHK's QA policy and requirement. Internally, it sets up an academic quality assurance and management structure to set policies and make decisions on various academic and QA issues, and to oversee and ensure the smooth and effective implementation of QA mechanisms and procedures across Academic Units and other concerned units of the School. It is worth-noting that it will take concerted efforts and a good QA mentality at all levels of the School in order to develop and operate a sound QA system.

Academic Quality Assurance and Management Structure

The QA system of SCS basically involves a comprehensive academic quality assurance and management structure to develop policies, to make decisions and to oversee operations to ensure the standard of its academic programmes and activities.

Academic Quality Assurance and Management Structure of SCS



Notes:

1. There are currently 3 programme coordination and management committees: Higher Diploma Programme, Full-time Diploma Programme, and Professional and Continuing Education Programme.
2. There are currently 3 Examination Boards: Higher Diploma Programme, Full-time Diploma Programme, and Professional and Continuing Education Programme.
3. There are Programme Team Meetings and Staff-Student Consultative Committee at Programme Team level.

Academic Board (AB)

The Academic Board of SCS is established to oversee and regulate all academic programmes and activities undertaken by respective Academic Units of the School. It is chaired by the Director of the School, and is responsible for making crucial academic decisions and setting various academic and QA policies. There are eight standing committees, including Programme Planning & 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-EB), 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 composition and terms of reference of the Academic Board are attached in Appendix 2.1.

Programme Planning & Development Committee (PPDC)

The Programme Planning & Development Committee is set up to review and advise on new programme proposals in alignment with the academic standards and quality assurance framework of the School and the University. It reviews and advises on proposals for programme revision to meet updated needs from market trends, programme reviews/ re-approvals, feedback from stakeholders. It also makes recommendations to the Academic Board on proposals for new and revised academic programmes. The composition and terms of reference of the Programme Planning & Development Committee are attached in Appendix 2.2.

Higher Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee (HDPCMC)

The Higher Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee is set up to oversee various academic and operational matters, and to ensure the smooth, quality delivery of Higher Diploma programmes. It coordinates with Academic Units to ensure thorough implementation of related QA processes across programmes, and monitors the teaching and learning progress of programmes and takes follow-up actions. The composition and terms of reference of the Higher Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee are attached in Appendix 2.3.

Higher Diploma Programme Examination Board (HDPEB)

The Higher Diploma Programme Examination Board is established to approve the assessment results of courses of individual programmes and to recommend to the AB the list of graduates and classification of awards for endorsement. It also assures the grading standard of final exams, review students' performance in individual courses, and identifies academically at-risk students for follow-up support. The composition and terms of reference of the Higher Diploma Programme Examination Board are attached in Appendix 2.4.

Full-time Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee (FTD-PCMC)

The Full-time Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee is established to oversee academic and operational matters to ensure smooth and quality delivery of Full-time Diploma Programme, ensure thorough implementation of related quality assurance processes, monitor teaching and learning progress of the Programme, and take follow-up actions if needed. The composition and terms of reference of the Full-time Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee are attached in Appendix 2.5.

Full-time Diploma Programme Examination Board (FTD-EB)

The Full-time Diploma Programme Examination Board is established to consider and approve recommendations from the Programme Director on the assessment results of courses offered under Diploma Programme, review students' overall performance in individual courses and the programme as a whole, and suggest ways for improvement in teaching and learning as appropriate, consider and approve recommendations from the Programme Director on the Dean's List, and Academic Probation and Discontinuation of Studies in accordance with relevant regulations as stipulated in the Student Handbook of the Full-time Diploma Programme and recommend for the endorsement of Academic Board the pass list of graduates and classification of awards. The composition and terms of reference of the Full-time Diploma Programme Examination Board are attached in Appendix 2.6.

Professional and Continuing Education Programme Coordination and Management Committee (PCE-PCMC)

The Professional and Continuing Education Programme Coordination and Management Committee is set up to oversee teaching and learning as well as academic-related matters to ensure quality delivery of Professional and Continuing Education Programmes. It ensures effective implementation of related quality assurance processes of PCE Programmes through reviews and updates, updates good practices and case or incident handling to upkeep and enhance smooth programme delivery and satisfying learning experience, and endorses or notes the endorsement of new General Courses for approval by Academic Board. It also reviews and advises on ways for better coordination of registry services and administrative support to promote efficient operations and workflow for PCE Programmes, and on ways of strategic marketing initiatives or campaigns for PCE Programmes. The composition and terms of reference of the Professional and Continuing Education Programme Coordination and Management Committee are attached in Appendix 2.7.

Professional and Continuing Education Programme Examination Board (PCE-PEB)

The Professional and Continuing Education Programme Examination Board is set up to assess the performance of students in Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (including Award Bearing Programmes, General Courses and Corporate Training). It approves the results of examination of Professional and Continuing Education Programmes and recommends for the endorsement of Academic Board the pass list of graduates and classification of awards; and also receives reports and considers irregular issues, such as plagiarism and cheating in exam. The composition and terms of reference of the Professional and Continuing Education Programme Examination Board are attached in Appendix 2.8.

Admissions Committee (ADC)

The Admissions Committee is set up to review admissions policies, guidelines and criteria for academic programmes offered by the School. It also monitors the implementation of setting and reviewing admissions policies, guidelines and criteria for academic programmes. It also considers and approves the applications for students with special education needs. The composition and terms of reference of the Admissions Committee are attached in Appendix 2.9.

Chapter 3 Programme Development and Approval

Development and Approval of New Full-time Programmes

SCS identifies and develops new programmes and courses to meet the learning and other professional training needs of the community, and to this end, has put in place a thorough QA procedure to facilitate and govern such development and endorsement in order to meet the required academic and professional standard and align with the strategic direction of the School. As part of CUHK, and to comply with the related QA policy and approval procedures, internally SCS has developed comprehensive QA procedures for the scrutiny and endorsement of new programmes and courses at the School level.

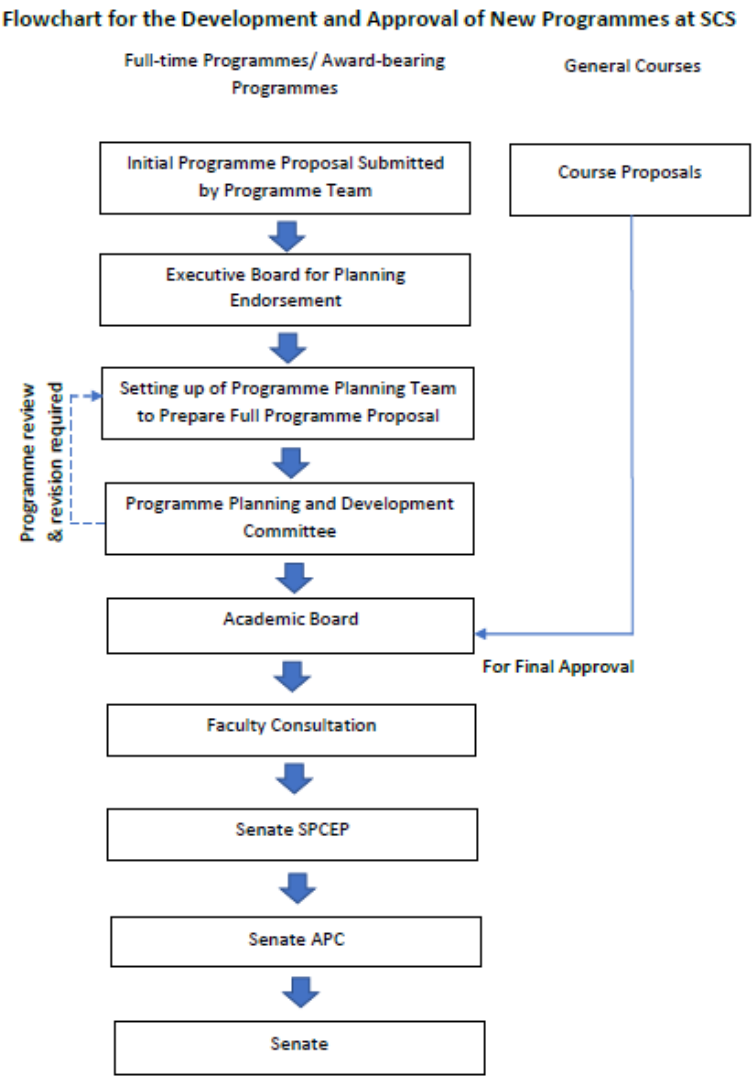
All full-time and part-time award-bearing programmes (that lead to awards granted by CUHK) have to be endorsed by the AB at the School level and approved by Senate of CUHK. For general courses leading to certificates of attendance or completion awarded by SCS, final approval needs to be sought from the AB of SCS.

Proposals for a new full-time or part-time award-bearing programme may come from an academic unit or other sources. Once a good programme initiative is identified, a Programme Proposal shall be drafted and submitted to the Programme Planning & Development Committee for discussion and endorsement before seeking approval from the Academic Board.

A Full Programme Proposal should provide details on:

(i) Justifications for the academic standard (including the QF Level),
(ii) Programme intended learning outcomes,
(iii) Curriculum design,
(iv) Course intended learning outcomes (CILOs) and the aligned teaching and learning activities and assessment framework,
(v) Requirements for admissions,
(vi) Progression and graduation,
(vii) Qualifications and experience of teaching staff,
(viii) Demand for the programme,
(ix) Financial feasibility, and
(x) (Special) Teaching facilities and resources, etc.

The Programme Planning & Development Committee (PPDC) will ensure that the proposed programme and related courses are of appropriate academic standard and QF level, and then make recommendations for improvements. The revised programme proposal will be submitted to the Academic Board for further deliberation and endorsement. The finalized programme proposal will then be sent to relevant academic faculty for consultation on the curriculum design and the academic standard before submitting to the Senate SPCEP (Senate SPCEP's proformas are attached as Appendix 3.1 and 3.2) and Senate APC for endorsement, and to the Senate for final approval. The flowchart for the Development and Approval of New Programmes at SCS is shown as follows:



For general courses, since the certificates of attendance or completion are awarded by SCS itself, the proposals for new general courses will be submitted to AB for approval.

Programmes Jointly offered by SCS and an Overseas Academic Institution Leading to Qualifications Awarded by the Partner Institution

For those programmes offered by SCS in collaboration with an overseas academic institution leading to awards conferred by the partner institution, the development and approval procedure is the same as that of programmes leading to awards by CUHK.
In addition, consideration should also be given to ensure that:

(1) the QA procedures and standard of the joint programme should follow those of the same programme offered in its home country;
(2) the QA policy and standard of SCS should also apply; and
(3) the proposed academic standard and delivery arrangement should be in compliance with the Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance. SCS will be required to provide extra information (e.g. criteria of appointment of teaching staff, student facilities/support, and course assessment, etc), when applying for exemption of a programme from registration under the Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance.

Caution should be taken in selecting partner institutions and the joint programmes. Both the partner institutions and the programmes to be offered should be of good academic and / or professional standing. In addition, the programmes should be in line with the mission of SCS and meet the continuing and professional education needs in Hong Kong. More importantly, according to the quality assurance guidelines on top-up degree programmes jointly organized by SCS and an overseas institution as stated in the paper noted by the Senate APC in 2004, SCS should only consider those universities which are of good academic standing as reflected in the university ranking order of their home country. For example, SCS should only consider those Australian universities being ranked three stars or above in the *Good Universities Guide* for all Australian universities, and for those universities in the UK, SCS should only select those with performance scores within the top 40th percentile of their "Entry Standards".

Proposals for such joint programmes should be submitted to PPDC and the AB of SCS for endorsement, to relevant faculty for academic consultation, and Senate APC for final approval.

Chapter 4 Programme Delivery and Monitoring

Academic Units

There are two Academic Units in SCS taking charge of the delivery of academic programmes and courses, and implementation of QA procedures, as follows:

- Full-time Programme
- Professional and Continuing Education Programme

Programme Management and Delivery

The programme delivery and monitoring processes in SCS are led by the respective Programme Director, who in turn is supported by Programme Leader, Programme Administrators and a team of full-time and part-time teaching staff. Especially for Higher Diploma Programmes, a full-time teaching staff member is appointed as **Academic Coordinator (AC)** to monitor and ensure quality delivery of a programme. (Terms of reference for Academic Coordinators are attached in Appendix 4.1)

Higher Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee (HDPCMC), which reports to the Academic Board of SCS, is set up to oversee and ensure the smooth delivery of programmes from admissions to graduation, and the effective implementation of academic and related QA processes across all HD programmes.

The Full-time Diploma Programme Coordination and Management Committee is established to oversee academic and operational matters to ensure smooth and quality delivery of Full-time Diploma Programme, ensure thorough implementation of related quality assurance processes, monitor teaching and learning progress of the programmes, and take follow-up actions if needed.

While for the award-bearing programmes and general courses, the Professional and Continuing Education Programme Coordination and Management Committee (PCE-PCMC) is set up to oversee academic matters and to ensure thorough implementation of related quality assurance processes across programmes. It also monitors teaching and learning progress and to advise on registry and programme administrative support to achieve smooth operation of Professional and Continuing Education Programmes.

Feedback on Programme Delivery and Quality

In addition to the setting up of a well-developed QA system and implementation procedures, regular and systematic efforts to collect and analyze information from students, teachers and other concerned parties contribute greatly to ensuring the smooth delivery and academic standard of programmes. To this end, SCS promotes effective communication among all concerned parties, and collects feedback from students, teaching staff, external examiners and honorary advisors, and occasionally from employers, internship/practicum providers and parents through both formal and informal channels for quality assurance and enhancement purposes.

From Teaching Staff

Teaching staff as front-line teachers working closely with students and as key participants in the QA system have a crucial role to play in the delivery of courses and related monitoring

process. Feedback from teaching staff can be collected through formal and informal channels, including, for example, Programme Team meetings, Programme Coordination and Management Committee meetings, Examination Board meetings, Academic Board meetings, Course and Teaching Evaluation and class visit follow-up meetings, and other frequent exchanges with Programme Directors, Programme Leaders, Academic Coordinators and Programme Administrators.

From External Examiners and Honorary Advisors

SCS values the advice and inputs of external academics and industry experts to uphold the quality and standard of its programmes and related teaching and learning processes. Such external consultation (and the feedback and suggestions collected in particular) contributes greatly to quality enhancement and development of programmes.

External Examiners (EE)

SCS appoints External Examiners (EE) to uphold the academic standard of its programmes at a level that is comparable to those offered in other tertiary education institutions, and to ensure that the assessment and examination system in place is fair and up to the required standard. In general, there should at least be an EE appointed for each Higher Diploma programme (or if needed, a cluster of courses of the same discipline or area of specialization). Terms of reference for EE are attached in Appendix 4.2.

Honorary Advisors (HA)

SCS also invites academics and industry professionals of high standing to offer valuable insights and advice for Academic Units to shape development strategies for academic programmes, and to assure the quality and standard of its programmes. Terms of reference for HA are attached in Appendix 4.3.

These external advisors will be consulted on need basis for advice in the development of new programmes, as well as to review existing curriculum and related teaching and learning for on-going improvement purposes. In addition and at the School level, there is the Advisory Board of Continuing and Professional Studies set up by CUHK with high-level members from CUHK and professional experts from the industry. The Board meets twice a year offering advice on the development directions and strategies for SCS.

From Students

Course and Teaching Evaluation (CTE)

SCS conducts a Course and Teaching Evaluation (CTE) questionnaire survey for all full-time and part-time courses offered in every semester to collect students' feedback on teaching and learning effectiveness and other related support. CTE results will be sent to concerned teaching staff, Academic Coordinator, Programme Leader and Programme Director, and a follow-up meeting should be set up to identify areas of good practice and also areas of concern and to discuss ways for possible improvement. Key details should be documented and signed for formal record purposes. It should be noted that part-time teaching staff with CTE score below 4.0 would normally not be re-appointed. The Course and Teaching Evaluation Questionnaire is set out in Appendix 4.4.

In addition, CUHK conducts a University-wide Sub-degree Student Experience Questionnaire (SSEQ) which covers full-time Higher Diploma Programmes offered by SCS. This survey is conducted by the Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR) every year, and the survey reports will be sent to concerned Academic Units providing crucial information for QA and enhancement consideration. The template for SSEQ is attached in Appendix 4.5.

Mid-Term Programme Survey

A mid-term programme survey is conducted once every semester for each full-time programme during week 5 to collect students' comments on programme delivery and their learning experience for any possible early intervention and improvement.

Staff-Student Consultative Committee (SSCC)

SSCC provides a platform to facilitate the sharing and discussion between staff and Higher Diploma Programme/Full-time Diploma Programme students on various teaching and learning issues. The Committee meets at least once a semester to collect such feedback and suggestions from students relating to their teaching and learning experiences. Key issues together with the follow-up plans will then be reported to the Programme Team meeting, and if needed, to other concerned Committees/Boards/Support Service Units for review and follow-up.

Exit Survey

In addition to information on further study and employment prospects, SCS conducts Graduate Exit Survey for Higher Diploma Programme and Full-time Diploma Programmes students to collect feedback from students regarding their overall learning experiences and the effectiveness of teaching and learning and other related facilities and support. The report will be submitted to the Executive Board meeting, and academic and other administrative units are required to take note of the relevant findings and formulate action plans to address issues raised by the students.

Written Compliments and Complaints to Management

Student feedback forms are available at the service counter at each SCS learning centres. Students may also convey appreciation or dissatisfaction by writing to the Director, Programme Directors, Programme Leaders or Programme Administrators, and normally responses should be given in a timely manner. Compliments and complaints provide opportunities for the School to collect feedback and to review and enhance the quality of courses delivery as well as academic and administrative procedures. In case of complaints that may relate to equal opportunities, students can follow the standard procedures laid out by CUHK posted under the Diversity and Inclusion Office. For other complaints of more complicated concerns, students could turn to the "Procedures for Dealing with Student Complaints" as shown on School website, should they consider necessary."

Informal Communication and Sharing

Teaching staff and Programme Administrators are encouraged to keep good rapport and frequent communication with students to make sure that they are progressing with their

studies. These exchanges also help identify useful information relating to teaching and learning issues based on which the School can better address students' learning needs and other college life issues and provide timely support or early intervention if needed. Teaching Staff and Programme Administrators shall forward such information to Programme Directors or senior management for issues to be handled at the programme or at the School level where appropriate.

From Research on Collected Data

The Data Collection Section is established to design, implement, and oversee the School's data collection and evaluation framework, a major aim of which is to uphold quality assurance in terms of programme management, delivery, and operations in conjunction with various types of academic support services. It develops structured, effective strategies and tools to

- collect multiple forms of feedback from various stakeholders and sources
- triangulate and process data in a principled, integrative manner to yield higher-level, wider-scope analyses
- produce statistics and reports – regular or strategic – to reveal patterns, trends, or insights that inform and drive efforts to review and improve the planning, quality, and delivery of programmes and services.

Main Elements of a Monitoring Process

Course Outline

Detailed course outline, which consists of the course intended learning outcomes, content topics, teaching and learning activities, the assessment framework with rubrics and a list of reading materials should be prepared by the concerned teaching staff, checked by Programme Administrator and endorsed by Programme Director to ensure alignment with the programme document (i.e. Course Description Form) and thorough implementation for all HD, Full-time Diploma and award-bearing programmes.

Class Visits and Follow-up Meetings

Class visit is conducted by the Programme Director, Programme Leader, Academic Coordinator or Programme Administrator to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching skills and approaches and other classroom management techniques of a teacher for HD, Full-time Diploma and award-bearing programmes. The class visit report should be given to the teaching staff concerned and a follow-up meeting should be held to discuss findings and areas for further improvement (if any). Normally, there should be at least one class visit per year for full-time and part-time teaching staff of full-time programmes. For part-time award-bearing programmes, class visit is mandatory for new part-time teaching staff and staff who are teaching a new course. The class visit form is attached in Appendix 4.6.

Examination Paper Setting and Moderation

Assessment constitutes a key part of the delivery of a course. It serves to inform the learning progress of students and assess students' performance in achieving the intended learning outcomes and other objectives of a course. In particular, the final exam as a summative assessment of a course can serve as a good tool to monitor its delivery as reflected by the scope

and format of questions, level of difficulty relating to the intended learning outcomes, and the grading standard and students' performance. Importantly, all exam papers for HD, Full-time Diploma and award-bearing programmes are required to be moderated by Programme Director, Programme Leader or other designated teaching staff in terms of appropriateness of scope and format of questions and level of difficulty. In addition, exam papers of selected courses in HD programmes will be sent to External Examiners for further moderation. Sample of the Examination Paper Moderation and External Examiner Forms for Higher Diploma programmes are attached in Appendix 4.7 and 4.8 respectively.

Course and Teaching Evaluation and Exit Survey

As mentioned previously, the teaching and learning effectiveness and delivery quality of a course can be monitored by respective CTE surveys conducted. The delivery quality and standard of the overall Higher Diploma Programmes and Full-time Diploma Programmes can be monitored by way of the Exit Survey conducted in each academic year.

Programme Delivery and Monitoring for Top-up Degree Programmes Jointly Organized by SCS and Overseas Institutions

Teaching Staff

The Top-up Degree programmes are taught by teaching staff of the partner institutions who are responsible for the same or similar courses at their own institutions. If local tutors are required to support such course delivery, they will be appointed by SCS, and their appointments will need to be approved by the partner institutions. Regular contacts and meetings between the faculty staff of partner institutions and local tutors are required so as to update each other on the students' learning progress and exchange information and solve problems relating to students' learning needs.

Quality Support

A full-time administrator in SCS is assigned to monitor the delivery of the programmes and works very closely with the partner institutions and students as well. Constant feedback about students' learning progress and their problems, if any, is frequently communicated to the partner institutions. A full-time counsellor in SCS is also assigned to provide guidance and other support services to the students. Furthermore, there are regular communications between the senior management of SCS and the partner institutions.

Feedback from Students

During the programme delivery, the Programme Administrator and concerned Programme Director hold regular meetings with students so as to exchange views and collect feedback and suggestions from students regarding teaching and learning and other related support issues, and to make necessary improvements if required.

Evaluation

By the end of each course/module, an evaluation survey with the questionnaire designed by the partner institution will be conducted by SCS. Staff members of both SCS and the partner

institutions as well as student representatives of the programmes concerned will meet annually to discuss matters related to the programme delivery and their learning progress. Improvement plans, if any, will be drafted for implementation.

Chapter 5 Programme Review

SCS devotes on-going efforts to regularly review its academic programmes and courses and the related delivery processes to identify areas for quality improvement, and to better address the learning needs of students. As mentioned in Chapter 1, SCS follows CUHK's Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review: III. Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing and Education Programmes (SPCEPs), which spells out clearly the policy, principles, procedures and guidelines for the implementation and endorsement of review on sub-degree, professional and continuing education programmes. These include a Course Evaluation per offering, Course Review on a regular basis, self-evaluation and a Programme Review once every 4 to 6 years. The activities and the flowchart of programme review process in a cycle are attached in Appendix 5.1.

Course Review

Academic Units are required to conduct course reviews on all academic programmes on a regular basis. This could be done as an internal review exercise on the course syllabus based on reflection from the teaching and learning processes, for example, regarding the appropriateness of learning outcomes, content topics, teaching and learning activities and assessment framework. Areas of improvement and an action plan, if any, can be suggested for further follow-ups that may lead to programme and/or course revisions. The template for Course Review (with guidance notes) is attached in Appendix 5.2.

Programme Review

Each Higher Diploma or award-bearing programme (QF Level 4-6) is required to conduct a Programme Review once every 4 to 6 years. In doing so, the Academic Unit will first need to draft a self-evaluation report to elaborate and evaluate among other things the curriculum design, learning activities and support, programme management and quality assurance, monitoring of teaching quality, and training and development of teaching staff, etc. The draft will be sent to PPDC for comments. An external panel with members from the academia of relevant disciplines and from the industries will be appointed to consider the self-evaluation report, especially the teaching and learning processes and the efforts on self-evaluation. The panel will meet and produce a programme review report and on receipt of the report, the concerned Academic Unit will draft feedback and develop an action plan in response to issues identified by the panel for possible improvement. This report together with the Response Document (which include an action plan) will be considered at the Academic Board meeting before submitting to Senate SPCEP for noting. The templates for Self-evaluation Report and Programme Review Report are attached as Appendix 5.3.

Chapter 6 Programme Revision and Re-approval

SCS devotes on-going efforts to review and if needed to revise its academic programmes and courses to keep the curriculum up-to-date and also to better address the learning needs of the community. Notably, it undergoes a major revision exercise for its existing programmes placed under the QR in order to align with the requirements of the new Award Titles Scheme and QF Credit assignment as introduced by EDB.

Programme Revision and Endorsement Procedure

SCS complies with CUHK's QA policy and processes for programme revisions, and all major or minor programme revisions must be submitted to Senate SPCEP for consideration. Main items of major and minor programme revisions as specified by Senate SPCEP are as follows:

Major Programme Revisions

i. A change in programme title;
ii. A reduction in programme contact hours;
iii. A change in the programme's overall objectives; and
iv. A change in programme structure/curriculum: any changes in core courses, and a 50% or above change of elective courses are deemed "major revisions". "Core courses" are defined as courses which are compulsorily required by all students of the programme.

(Faculty consultation will be required for major revisions of all academic programmes at QF Level 4-6.)

Minor Programme Revisions

i. A change in programme structure/curriculum involving less than 50% of elective courses;
ii. A change in programme admission and entry requirements;
iii. Change in graduation requirements and attendance requirement to fall below 70% at the programme level; and
iv. A change in assessment mode at the programme level.

Programme revisions should normally be initiated by the programme team. Proposals for programme revisions endorsed by the Programme Directors of the concerned Academic Unit should be forwarded to PPDC and AB for consideration before submitting to Senate SPCEP for endorsement. They will then be forwarded to the Senate APC / Senate for final consideration, either for noting as record or for approval in the Senate APC / Senate meeting. Senate SPCEP will be informed of the decision by the Senate Secretariat either way.

Programme Revisions for the Award Titles Scheme and QF Credit Assignment

SCS undertakes a major revision exercise for its existing academic programmes placed under the QR in order to meet the new Award Titles Scheme and QF Credit requirements. As announced by EDB in October 2012, all programmes registered under QR must comply with such ATS and QFC requirements on or before 1 January 2016. In achieving this, SCS has developed an implementation plan for all its existing programmes and a set of guidelines and templates for adoption in the assignment and approval procedure. Essentially, the same approval procedure for programme revisions is adopted for this particular exercise.

Programme Re-approval

Maximum Validity Period

All academic programmes at QF Level 4-6 in SCS approved by the Senate are subject to a maximum duration for validity of up to 6 years and are required to seek re-approval from CUHK's Committee on Re-approval of Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes. The Committee will hold a meeting and consider the re-approval by looking into the QA indicators, e.g. profile of teachers, academic leadership, class size, CTE results and course assessment results and student profile, as well as financial indicators. Normally, another 6-year duration of validity will be approved given that the academic quality and financial status of a programme are considered to be good and healthy by the Committee. The Self-reflection Report for the Committee on Re-approval of Sub-degree, Professional and Continuing Education Programmes (SPCEPs)is attached in Appendix 6.1.

Degree Programmes Jointly offered by SCS and an Overseas Academic Institution Leading to Qualifications Awarded by the Partner Institution

A similar re-approval procedure is adopted for those degree programmes offered by SCS in collaboration with an overseas academic institution (leading to awards conferred by the partner institution). The re-approval documents, including the key QA and financial statistics of the concerned programmes, will be submitted to PPDC for endorsement before forwarding to the Ad-hoc Review Committee on Re-approval of Self-financed Degree Programmes for consideration. This committee, which consists of staff members from CUHK and SCS, will meet and review the re-approval documents. The re-approval recommendation together with the action plans prepared by the concerned Academic Unit will be endorsed by the Academic Board before submitting to the Senate APC for final approval. Normally, another 6-year duration of validity will be approved given that the academic quality and financial status of a programme are considered to be good and healthy by the Committee.

Chapter 7 Admissions

Admissions form a crucial part of programme delivery. It can be seen as a matching process through which Academic Units recruit students of the right qualifications and attributes to the programme and at the same time students are able to make a good, informed choice of programme. Especially for the latter, among other things, Academic Units should ensure that sufficient and accurate programme information is provided in the promotion brochure, leaflet and website, and also through enquiries and academic advising.

Admissions requirements and procedures constitute a key part of the QA system and should be properly set, observed and followed through. Importantly, Academic Units are required to recruit students to programmes according to the minimum entrance requirements as set out in the programme proformas, and to observe the admission guidelines and follow through the related approval procedures for individual programmes. Caution should be taken for the admissions of students of non-standard qualifications and with special learning needs where a special approval will be required, especially for Higher Diploma Programmes and Full-time Diploma Programmes. The Admissions Committee is assigned with the role to set admissions policy, procedures and guidelines for all SCS programmes, and to review them when needed.

Admissions Requirements

Admissions requirements of a programme are set to specify clearly the minimum level of academic qualifications, relevant working experiences, professional qualifications, and other related attributes needed to study a programme. These requirements serve to ensure that students being admitted to a programme are able to handle the study and progress well to complete the study.

Higher Diploma Programmes

Applicants should fulfill any one of the following requirements:

- Level 2 in five subjects* in Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination including Chinese Language[#] and English Language, or equivalent; or
- Pass in one A Level or two AS Level subjects, plus five passes in HKCEE including Level 2/Grade E in Chinese Language and English Language, or equivalent; or
- Satisfactory completion of the Diploma of Applied Education Programme; or
- Aged 21 or above

** If one of the five HKDSE subjects is 'Citizenship and Social Development', the minimum admission requirement will become "Attained" for 'Citizenship and Social Development' and Level 2 in four other HKDSE subjects including Chinese Language and English Language. Besides, Level 2 in Mathematics Extended Part (Module 1 or Module 2) is also recognized as one of the five HKDSE subjects in fulfilling the minimum admission requirements.*

** A maximum of two Applied Learning subjects, excluding Applied Learning Chinese (ApL(C)), can be used in the application. "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction" Level in Applied Learning subjects will be considered as equivalent to Level 2 and Level 3 in HKDSE subjects respectively.*

[#] Applied Learning Chinese (ApL(C)) will be accepted as an alternative Chinese Language qualification for admission consideration for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) DSE candidates.

Full-time Diploma Programmess

Applicants should fulfill any one of the following requirements:

- Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination with at least 6 points in the best 5 subjects plus Level 1 or above in English Language and Chinese Language; or
- Equivalent qualifications

Award-bearing Programmes

General minimum admissions requirements for award-bearing programmes pitch at different levels include:

QF Level 1 - 3

- Completion of secondary education, or equivalent; or
- Aged 21 or above.

QF Level 4

- Level 2 in five subjects in Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination including Chinese Language and English Language, or equivalent; or
- Pass in one A Level or two AS Level plus five passes in HKCEE including Level 2 / Grade E in Chinese Language and English Language, or equivalent; or
- Satisfactory completion of a Pre-Associate Degree programme; or equivalent; or
- Satisfactory completion of the Diploma Yi Jin; or
- Aged 21 or above.

Normally, award-bearing programmes may have other specific or additional admissions requirements.

General Courses

Except otherwise specified, the general courses offered by the School are open to all applicants. Applicants should possess a valid Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card for enrolment (except for Online and Distance Learning Programmes).

Admission of Mainland Students to Higher Diploma Programmes

The following admissions requirements are set for the Higher Diploma Programmes for Mainland students 2021-22 onwards:

- Successful completion of senior secondary 3; and
- Achieve 50% or above of the total score in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) in the designated region of China (including a 50% or above in Chinese and English); OR
- Any other equivalent qualifications

Admissions Procedure

A complete admission procedure for Academic Units to determine the eligibility and suitability of the applicant for the programme includes the filling out of an application form and provision of related academic and other professional credentials. Individual programmes may require

applicants to attend an interview as part of the selection process. Importantly, face-to-face interview is mandatory for Higher Diploma programme and Full-time Diploma Programme application where interviewers can assess the applicants' communication skills, attitude, motivation for the study and other attributes relevant for the study. Interviewers are required to complete an interview form to record the assessment status and comments on an applicant. The interview form is provided in Appendix 7.2.

Special Admission Criteria for Higher Diploma Programmes

Applicants who do not meet the minimum entrance requirements but have other outstanding talents or abilities may still be admitted to Higher Diploma Programmes under special consideration. A total of up to 15% of total student number is allowed for an individual Higher Diploma programme, and up to 10% of total student number on an institutional level. All recommendations from Academic Units with sound justifications and remedial study plans for the candidates will need to be endorsed by the Academic Board before reporting to the Senate SPCEP.

Admissions of Students with Special Learning Needs

Applicants with special learning needs are requested to provide details of their issues and nature of their needs in the application form. Their special learning needs shall not affect their application for admission to the School, provided that the applicants are physically able to cope with the programme being applied for. Students with special learning needs can be admitted provided that (1) they are able to handle the study, every teaching, learning and assessment activity, and will not be put to any disadvantage; (2) there are learning facilities, equipment and other resources in support of such special learning needs. Importantly, all recommendations will need to be approved by the Admissions Panel reporting to the AB.

Diversity and Inclusion

The School is committed to promoting a learning environment which embraces diversity of talents and interests while cultivating a spirit of inclusiveness, whereby different students can develop and grow in an accepting community as peers on the path of continuing education. Such a commitment to providing equal opportunities for learners free of discrimination echoes and upholds the Diversity and Inclusion Policy of CUHK (link), which guides SCS's efforts to support students with relevant resources in ensuring the quality of their learning experiences, with due consideration of their diverse needs. The policy also serves as a guide for all SCS staff in discharging their duties and contributing their service to the School.

Chapter 8 Assessment, Grade Approval and Award

Assessment constitutes an integral part of the delivery of an academic programme. It informs the learning progress of students and equally importantly, evaluates the overall performance of students in achieving the learning outcomes and other required competencies in a course as well as the programme as a whole. Students are normally required to pass the assessments and meet the attendance requirement of each course of a programme in order to complete the study. Assessment tasks and the related grading and approval must be processed properly to ensure validity, reliability and fairness of the assessment, and the overall delivery quality of a programme.

The assessment framework and weights, as well as the overall graduation requirements of each Higher Diploma and award-bearing programme are spelt out clearly in the concerned Programme Proforma and Course Description forms approved by the Senate. Assessment tasks of a course must be implemented and graded according to such framework in the Course Description Form, and the grades should be approved in the concerned Examination Board meetings. Following the guidelines set by Senate SPCEP, the overall pass (graduation) list of a programme should be submitted to the Academic Board for endorsement (according to the guidelines as set by Senate SPCEP) before forwarding to Senate SPCEP for approval.

Assessments

Continuous Assessments and Final Exam

Assessments for a course usually consist of continuous assessments and a final exam. Continuous Assessments are formative by design, serving to inform both teaching staff and students of their learning progress. They include tests, quizzes, projects, case studies, presentations, essays etc. Teaching staff should return assignments to students within 2-4 weeks for full-time and part-time award-bearing programmes with the possible exception for final paper/project. The final exam (or final project in some of the courses) is summative aiming to determine how well the students can perform in a course for progressing to a higher level and for graduation purposes. Students should demonstrate how well they have met the learning outcomes of each course, and achieved the standard appropriate to the grades awarded. Unless otherwise specified, the passing mark is 50% for both continuous assessment and final exam (or project) respectively and students are required to pass both of them in order to pass a course for full-time programmes.

Attendance Requirement

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes of the courses for which they have registered. Importantly, students are required to achieve at least 70% of attendance except for online courses, in order to be entitled to take the final exam (if any) and to pass a course. Academic Units should send a notice to students to remind them of the attendance policy every semester, and teaching staff are required to check attendance in each class and keep clear and accurate records. Programme Directors should send a formal notice to students failing the attendance requirement to inform them so and the consequence.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to meet the highest standard of honesty in the execution of academic work and assessment tasks. A student shall be subject to disciplinary action for any violation of academic honesty. Students are required to strictly avoid plagiarism in all assignments and

cheating in examinations for all courses. All text-based assignments must be submitted via VeriGuide for plagiarism detection. Teaching staff should report all suspected cases of plagiarism or cheating immediately to the concerned Programme Director. A Programme Student Disciplinary Committee will be set up to look into the case, including meeting with the students, collecting and analyzing the information, and determining the penalty if case confirmed. Guidelines and procedures for handling cases of plagiarism and cheating in examinations and the Report template from Programme Student Disciplinary Committee are attached in Appendices 8.1 and 8.2 respectively.

Grading System and Approval

Letter grades and distinction/pass/fail grading are used to report academic results of a course and should be awarded on a criterion–referenced basis in line with the outcome-based approach for Higher Diploma Programme, Full-time Diploma programmes and award-bearing programmes. Teaching staff should refer to rubrics when giving comments to students on essays, presentations, reports, group/panel discussions, projects, translations and any written assessments that carry 10% or above weighting. For group project assessments, both individual and group grades must be given to ensure fair marking.

Teaching staff are required to transfer the raw marks of a course to the customized mark sheet and compile the grades and grade distribution for submission purposes. Grades should be moderated and endorsed by the Programme Director before forwarding to Examination Board for approval. In addition to grade approval for each course, the Examination Board will also look into the academic performance of each student, and identify the academically at-risk students for academic consultation and other follow-up actions for Higher Diploma Programme and Full-time Diploma Programmes. The Mark Sheet template and Grading Guidelines for Higher Diploma programmes are attached in Appendices 8.3 and 8.4 respectively.

Detailed academic regulations stipulating course assessment, grading system, examinations suspension, withdrawal and dismissal, student appeals against assessment grades, graduation requirements and progression for different programmes are provided in the Student Handbooks.

Pass List

Students who have completed all courses, passed all the assessments and met the attendance requirement of each of the courses are able to graduate from a Higher Diploma programme, Full-time Diploma Programme or obtain the award from the award-bearing programme. The pass (graduate) lists have to be endorsed by the Academic Board before submitting to the Senate SPCEP for approval. The Pass List Submission Proforma is shown in Appendix 8.5. Senate SPCEP has set guidelines on the award of Distinction and Merit for Higher Diploma programmes and award-bearing programmes offered by SCS, and the details are attached in Appendix 8.6.