



6 January 2022

To: Teachers of University GE courses, 2021-22 Term 2

Dear colleagues,

Teaching University General Education (University GE) Courses (2021-22 Term 2)

Welcome to the community of University General Education (University GE)! I would like to first thank colleagues who have offered University GE courses in the past for their important contributions to the programme and for their continued participation in it. I would also like to thank colleagues who are new to the programme for their interest in offering new courses to enrich the University GE curriculum.

Let me take this opportunity to highlight the significance of your courses to our undergraduates, and to draw attention to the various policy matters and administrative arrangements for course delivery.

A) Mission of University GE and the role of your courses

General Education (GE) at CUHK is designed to furnish students with a broad intellectual perspective. The courses you will be teaching carry a special significance because for most students, yours may be the only courses that will give them exposure to key ideas and perspectives of your academic discipline which will broaden their intellectual horizon. With such an exposure, students will be better prepared to cope with the unfamiliar, and to connect their learning with the wider world.

For your reference, the general objectives of GE, the objectives of University GE Areas, and the desired characteristics of all GE courses adopted by the Senate Committee on General Education (SCGE) are given in [Appendix I](#).

B) Approved course design and course outline

All University GE courses have to be approved by the SCGE before actual implementation, and are subject to regular course review. Please adhere to the approved course design and core syllabus when preparing your course outline for the current term. A copy of the approved course design is available at your department/programme office.

We have developed for your reference [a course outline template](#) which fits the requirements of the university-wide “Integrated Framework for Curriculum Development and Review”, an important component in the quality assurance framework of formal studies. The template lists all the essential items that the students need to know for selecting courses suitable to their study plan. You may choose to present the information in your own preferred format but are required to include all the essential items in your course outline. To align with the [latest University Assessment Policy](#), please also include grade descriptors in your course outline for students’ information.

To ensure that the University GE course archive is up-to-date, **please send a copy of your course outline to us by 14 January 2022 (Friday)**. The course outline will be posted on our website for students’ reference.



C) Full implementation of criterion-referencing

In line with the [revised University Assessment Policy](#), the outcome-based approach (OBA), accompanied by full implementation of criterion-referencing and grade descriptors, has been in place for course assessment in the entire GE provision from the academic year 2018-19. To facilitate the transition from norm-referencing to criteria-referencing, and to better inform our colleagues of the good practices of writing grade descriptors, [PowerPoint slides](#) of lunch seminars given earlier by the Director of the Center for Learning Enhancement and Research (CLEAR) have been made available to colleagues (login to Office 365 of CUHK is required). In the meantime, you are most welcome to share your concerns, suggestions, and comments with us about the implementation of the Assessment Policy.

D) Online Course and Teaching Evaluation (OCTE)

Online Course and Teaching Evaluation (OCTE) has been implemented since the second term of the academic year 2019-20 and will continue to be adopted this term for all University GE courses, irrespective of teaching mode adopted. Please read through the pertinent arrangement and timeline set out in point 3 of [Appendix III](#) of this document.

E) Policies and recommendations on course delivery

Please take into account in your course implementation the following policies and recommendations adopted by the SCGE on the delivery of University GE courses (details are set out in [Appendix II](#)):

1. approved course design and course review
2. assignment of reading materials;
3. course assessment and grade appeal;
4. honesty in academic work;
5. using films and movies in class; and
6. team-taught courses.

F) Administrative matters

Some of the most frequently asked questions by University GE teachers are operational matters relating to course enrolment and administration. The following items are addressed in [Appendix III](#):

1. add/drop of University GE courses;
2. medium of instruction;
3. term-end course and teaching evaluation arrangement; and
4. recommendations for library books.

Please visit our website at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/oge> for more information about GE at CUHK. Information for teachers can be found in the “[Staff Area](#)”.

Under the current funding model, your contribution to both University and College GE teaching will be counted towards your teaching load, and clerical/teaching support will be provided by the office of the department/programme where you are based. The staff of the Office of University General Education (OUGE) would be pleased to answer any enquiry you may have and render administrative support. Your contact persons in OUGE are:



Courses offered by Faculties of Arts, Law and Science –
Mr. Jacky Yiu, Executive Officer Ext. 31577 jacky.yiu@cuhk.edu.hk

Courses offered by Faculties of Business Administration and Social Science; and
the Colleges –
Miss Karena Wong, Project Coordinator Ext. 30370 karenawong@cuhk.edu.hk

Courses offered by Faculties of Education, Engineering and Medicine; and OUGE –
Miss Grace Lau, Executive Officer Ext. 37030 gracelau@cuhk.edu.hk

You are most welcome to contact me on Ext. 30588 or Ms. Annie Cheung, Assistant Registrar,
on Ext. 37048 if you have any other questions or suggestions.

Thank you once again and wish you a successful term.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Hun-tak Lee

Director, Office of University General Education

Encl.

- Appendix I Objectives of General Education (GE) and the Four Areas of University GE
- Appendix II Policies and recommendations on University GE course delivery
- Appendix III Administrative matters of University GE courses

c.c. School Directors/Department Chairpersons/Programme Directors



THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Office of University General Education

**Objectives of General Education (GE) and
the Four Areas of University General Education (University GE)**

1. General objectives

GE plays a vital role in the University's mission to provide a balanced undergraduate education for all students. It equips students with the intellectual capacity for understanding critical issues, ideas, and values of humanity and of modern society. It nurtures students to be educated persons capable of making informed judgment and taking up the challenges of this ever-changing world. Preparing students to be lifelong learners and engaged citizens with a global awareness, GE targets their growth as whole persons rather than specialists. More specifically, GE at CUHK is designed to:

- a. furnish students with a broad intellectual perspective for dealing with the unfamiliar questions;
- b. engage students in active reflections on perennial issues, prompting them to make connections between intellectual pursuits and life at work, at home and in the community;
- c. promote an understanding of Chinese cultural heritage and of other cultural traditions;
- d. develop the attitudes and skills that are conducive to critical thinking, self-expression and communication with the others; and
- e. extend students' curiosity, promote a habit of reading widely, and develop attitudes and competence as independent learners and team players.

2. Role of University GE

University GE aims at broadening students' knowledge base by providing a structured exposure to different aspects of fundamental human concerns, and to various approaches to such concerns. It consists of two components:

- a. [The General Education Foundation \(GEF\) programme](#), a 6-unit common core programme with an aim to provide students with common learning experience and a foundation for university learning. The programme consists of two courses, *In Dialogue with Humanity*^[Note] and *In Dialogue with Nature*^[Note], in which students, through the study of classics, engage in dialogues with the nature and with the humanity to explore the world of science and knowledge, and to reflect on ideal society and good life. *[Note] including the blended version of the courses, viz. "In Dialogue with Humanity (Cross-institutional)" and "In Dialogue with Nature (Cross-institutional)"*
- b. The Four Areas of University GE



3. Desired characteristics of the Four-Area University GE courses

Building upon the GEF programme, the Four Areas of University GE further broaden students' exposure by inviting them to examine four fundamental realms of human concerns, namely, the relation with one's cultural heritage, with the physical world, with fellow human beings and with oneself. Emphasis is also put on critical appreciation of the various disciplinary approaches to these concerns, particularly in their relevance to contemporary issues.

The Four-Area courses possess the following characteristics:

- a. emphasize breadth and connectivity rather than depth alone;
- b. emphasize intellectual ideals rather than skills;
- c. give an overall perspective of the basic academic framework, concept and methodology of the subject concerned;
- d. relate the subject matters to human experience and/or modern life;
- e. require neither prerequisite nor specialized technical knowledge beyond the basic aptitudes of a university student;
- f. preferably adopt an interdisciplinary approach, and be conducted from the standpoint of multiple cross-discipline learning;
- g. preferably encourage both self-discovery and self-expression; and
- h. provide the content and the intellectual depth expected of credit-bearing university courses at the same level.

4. Objectives of the Four Areas of University GE

Each area has its specific area objectives:

a. Area A Chinese Cultural Heritage

This area introduces students to the essential characteristics of Chinese culture. By way of an integrated approach, students will learn to appreciate and evaluate the Chinese cultural heritage and its relevance in modern life from a broad intellectual perspective.

After studying in this area, a student will be able to:

1. identify the essential characteristics of Chinese culture;
2. recognize that Chinese culture involves different aspects and components;
3. develop a critical appreciation of Chinese culture; and
4. recognize the relevance of Chinese cultures in modern life.



b. Area B Nature, Science and Technology

This area broadens students' perspectives on nature, science and technology. It introduces students to various principles, discoveries and methods of science. Students will learn to appraise and evaluate with a scientific attitude human's role in being part of nature and the impact of science and technology on modern life.

After studying in this area, a student will be able to:

1. describe major principles, discoveries and methods of the course's field of study;
2. apply basic scientific methods and principles to analyze issues related to nature, science and technology;
3. explore on their own: issues related to nature, science and technology that are of interest to them;
4. appraise and evaluate human's role in being part of nature; and
5. appraise and evaluate the impact of science and technology on human life.

c. Area C Society and Culture

This area enhances students' understanding of the ways in which human societies are constituted and human cultures are represented, in their generality as well as diversity. Students are introduced to the theories and/or methodologies through which social, political, economic or cultural issues are studied.

After studying in this area, a student will be able to:

1. understand better the ways in which human society and culture are formed;
2. appreciate the diversity of different cultures, values and belief;
3. apply methods studied to analyze related issues; and
4. apply theories studied to explain related issues.

d. Area D Self and Humanity

This area enables students to explore the diversity of human values, reflect on the meaning of human endeavors, and gain a better understanding of themselves.

After studying in this area, a student will be able to do at least two of the following:

1. examine one's self with a broadened perspective;
2. appreciate the diversity of values and beliefs;
3. make informed decision about moral issues;
4. articulate his/her own moral judgment;
5. appreciate creative works with a board perspective; and
6. perform critical reasoning.



THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Office of University General Education

**Policies and recommendations on
University General Education (University GE) course delivery**

1. Policy on approved course design and course review

All University GE courses are drawn up by teaching units and approved by the Senate Committee on General Education (SCGE). Course delivery should in principle adhere to the approved course design, which is available at your department office.

To assure the teaching and learning quality, all University GE courses are reviewed every three to four years against the General Education (GE) general objectives and the approved course design. Course review is based on the course materials archived and teaching units will be informed when their courses are scheduled for review.

2. Policy on the assignment of reading materials

University GE courses should provide similar academic content and intellectual depth expected of other university courses bearing the same credits. There should be adequate academic readings for University GE courses. **Reading only non-academic news articles or online resource will not be acceptable.**

Course teachers should specify 1-2 key readings for each topic covered in the course syllabus with some mechanism built into course assessment to check that the assigned readings have been read. Some good practices are:

- a. Giving clear guidelines and build-in reading requirement in written assignment(s), e.g. to examine a specific issue and cite at least two references from the assigned reading list.
- b. Setting written assignment(s) and examination questions related to the required readings.

3. Policy on course assessment and grade appeal

- a. Course assessment should be articulated with the desired learning outcomes. Teachers need to consider what and how the assessment tasks are able to help students achieve the desired learning outcomes.
- b. GE courses should carry the same workload in terms of reading and assignment as other university courses with the same number of units. It is desirable to incorporate mid-term test or other continuous assessment to assess learning progress and to complement the final examination or term paper.
- c. Course assessment should not be conducted solely in response-type questions (e.g. multiple choice, true-or-false) or very short questions (those to be answered in a few words).
- d. **Marks should not be awarded for mere attendance but could be deducted for absence.** If class participation is an assessment component, it should be effectively assessed and recorded.



- e. As double-coded courses should be identical in all aspects and the credits earned are transferable between GE and departmental programmes, **students of double-coded courses, whether registered under GE code or department code, should be assessed as one single class with the same assessment standard.** Prevailing University assessment policies and guidelines should apply to the double-coded class combined rather than treating the classes each under GE code and department code separately.
- f. All final examinations will be scheduled centrally by the Registration and Examinations Section within the official examination period.
- g. **GE course grades are subject to review and approval by the Assessment Panel on GE.** Teachers may provide grading criteria/rubrics and output of students to justify exceptional student performance. **Course grades should not be released until they are duly approved by the Panel.**
- h. Teachers are advised to abide by [The University's Policy on Assessment of Student Learning in Taught Programmes](#).
- i. Please note the following procedures of **handling grade appeal** for University GE courses:
 - For University GE courses, all grade appeals must be submitted in writing to the Office of University General Education (OUGE) within two weeks after the release of course grades.
 - OUGE will first consult the course teacher(s) concerned for a review of the course grade. The teacher(s) may decide to revise the grade if a careful review of the assessment component(s) involved justifies the change. The course teacher(s) should then submit a request for grade revision to the Director of University GE on [the prescribed University GE Grade Change Request Form](#).
 - If the matter cannot be resolved by this stage, the student may substantiate the appeal by completing the University GE Grade Appeal Form. A reasonable justification must be provided on the Form. Otherwise, the application may not be accepted.
 - Upon receipt of the Appeal Form with reasonable justification, the Director of University GE will request the offering unit to assign one or more independent teachers to re-assess the written assignment(s), examination answer script(s) and other relevant assessment component(s) of the student. The course teacher(s) shall provide the grading criteria as reference materials.
 - The result of this second marking shall be final; and the grade may remain unchanged, be adjusted upward or downward.

4. Policy on honesty in academic work

All written assignments should be submitted via VeriGuide, an online platform for similarity detection of assignments. The VeriGuide team can be reached by email: veriguide@cuhk.edu.hk.

If the course teacher(s) judge(s) that there is a plagiarism case after reading the Veriguide report, the teacher(s) shall alert and give the student concerned access to the relevant portion of the report before the case is taken to any committee concerned. The matter shall not be handled by the teacher(s) alone, since this will lead to inconsistent treatment. All incidence of suspected plagiarism in University GE courses should be reported to the relevant Faculty Disciplinary Committee.

Please read the detailed policy at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/index.htm>.



5. Policy on using films and movies in class

Viewing of films should generally take place outside the class, with the exception of short fragments for immediate discussion in the class. For courses related to films and movies, course teachers should ensure that film copies are available in the University Library and arrange for viewing sessions outside class time.

6. Policy on team-taught courses

For courses jointly offered by a group of teachers, it is important to ensure that there exists a coherent and coordinated academic framework to connect the wide array of topics covered by different teachers. Coordination among the teachers to work out a coherent syllabus is indispensable, and it is necessary to have a course coordinator who can monitor the implementation quality and coordinate overall assessment of students' academic performance in the course. Pre-course and post-course meetings are necessary to monitor and ensure the standard and a smooth delivery of the course.



THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Office of University General Education

Administrative matters of University General Education (University GE) courses

1. Add/drop of University GE courses

Course registration and add/drop should be performed by students on the Chinese University Student Information System (CUSIS). Add/drop after the stipulated period/outside CUSIS will not be considered unless there are compelling reasons. **Course teachers may refer enquiries and requests for add/drop of University GE course to the Office of University General Education (OUGE).** Authority for approving late add/drop rests with the Dean of the student's Faculty but course teachers and this office will be duly consulted.

2. Medium of Instruction

Please follow the language of instruction as stated in the teaching timetable since students' choice of course may depend on their preferred medium of instruction. The Registry will not allow a change in the medium of instruction after course registration until the close of add/drop period, subject to a unanimous decision of the teacher and all students enrolled on the course by a secret ballot conducted after the deadline for adding courses.

For classes conducted in C&E (Cantonese and English), please inform students of the following:

- the primary teaching language in class, be it Cantonese or English;
- whether or not readings are available in both Chinese and English; and
- whether or not assignment(s) and coursework can be submitted in either Chinese or English.

Please state the aforesaid information about the teaching language explicitly in the course outline for students' reference and advise those who are not proficient in the primary teaching language to drop the course during the online add/drop period.

3. Term-end course and teaching evaluation arrangement

Online Course and Teaching Evaluation (OCTE) would be conducted within the last two teaching weeks of the term and the email containing the respective survey link would be sent to students by OUGE via the OCTE system. To ensure a good response rate, please set aside 10-15 minutes during an appropriate class session of your choice (including class session conducted online if such mode is to be adopted) during the stipulated evaluation period for students to complete the survey in the class, and notify students of the schedule in advance. Teaching units and course teachers will be informed of the findings within one month after finalization of course grades.

4. Recommendations for library books

Please send your recommendation for library acquisition to OUGE on the [Library Book Recommendation Form](#). The completed Recommendation Form could be sent to ouge@cuhk.edu.hk.

