

‘Light’ Reviews
Report on the General Education Programme

This template is provided to reduce the workload of Review Panels in drafting their Reports. Since circumstances will vary across Programmes, the items suggested below are neither mandatory nor exhaustive, but should provide a useful starting point. Lengthy comments and/or explanations can be provided via footnotes outside the boxes.

1. *	Name of Programme(s)	General Education
	Date(s) of review	8 December 2011
	Names of reviewers	
	Chairperson	Professor Fan Kin Keung, Dennis (Member of the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning; Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies) of the Faculty of Business Administration)
	Member from a broadly similar discipline area	Professor Yeung Sau Chu, Alison (Associate Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education)
	Member from a different discipline area	Professor Lee Kin Hong (Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Faculty of Engineering)
	In-attendance	Ms. Wong Kit May (Academic and Quality Section)

Rating scale

Since this is a ‘light’ review, and information will be confined largely to programme design, it is thought that in most circumstances the rating should fall in the range 2 to 4. The two extreme points should be used only exceptionally, to indicate areas where SCTL’s direct attention is thought to be necessary/ appropriate.

1	Needs improvement; SCTL needs to follow up
2	Needs enhancement
3	Satisfactory
4	Good
5	Exemplary; SCTL may want to note and spread the good practice

PART 1: FOR PROGRAMME

No.*	Aspect	Rating
Part A: Reflection		
2.	Progress on action plan Comments: The last programme review of the General Education Programme (GE) was conducted in 2008, covering the University General Education (UGE) Programme and the College General Education (CGE) Programmes of the four existing Colleges (Chung Chi / New Asia / United / Shaw). An action plan was made in response to the recommendations of the Review Panel on the GE Programme.	4.5

	<p>The Panel is pleased to note the good progress of the action plan for the GE Programme. It is evident that the collaboration between UGE and CGE has been strengthened to bring greater coherence for UGE and CGE to complement each other. The UGE and CGE have jointly worked out a new set of goal and role statements for the UGE and CGE to be complementary in enhancing students' growth as whole persons and independent learners: UGE puts more emphasis on intellectual broadening and reflection on perennial issues, while CGE targets students' adaptation to university life, appreciation of university learning, and develop their skills necessary for working in interdisciplinary team.</p> <p>It is also gratifying to note that the quality assurance mechanism has been enhanced with ongoing review of the curriculum, learning activities and assessment strategies. The UGE and CGE conducted regular reviews of their courses to align the course objectives and the intended learning outcomes with the respective UGE/CGE objectives and the overall GE Programme goals. The existing quality assurance mechanism for CGE has been reviewed to make it more explicit and each of the four existing Colleges will have a well-defined body for quality assurance. Feedback from students and course teachers will be systematically collected to gauge the quality of teaching and learning. Regular course review will also be implemented. A common framework for assessing student learning in the GE Programme as a whole will be constructed, including the freshmen survey, final year student survey and alumni survey. The UGE and CGE have jointly launched a pilot study of the freshmen survey since September 2010. A pilot survey of final year students of New Asia College was held in April 2011. Chung Chi, United and Shaw Colleges will join in the pilot survey for the 2010-11 graduating cohort. New Colleges will also participate in the survey when they have their graduating cohorts.</p> <p>While good progresses have been made, they appeared to be results of informal coordination among the colleagues in charge of the UGE and CGE. It is suggested that a formal platform be set up, and mechanisms be formalized for the purpose of achieving sustainable development and progresses in light of the increase in the number of new Colleges.</p>	
Part B: Programme design		
3.	<p>Introduction — <i>Strategies adopted and process followed by the programme in developing the programme design</i></p> <p>Comments: The GE Programme is a required component of all undergraduate studies. In 2012, it will account for 17% (21 units) of the total unit requirement (123 units). Under the four-year curriculum, the GE Programme is composed of three components: General Education Foundation (GEF) (6 units), UGE (9 units) and CGE (6 units).</p> <p>With the establishment of the five new Colleges (Morningside / S.H. Ho / C.W. Chu / Wu Yee Sun / Lee Woo Sing), the 'light' reviews of the four-year curriculum of the GE Programme include the UGE and the CGE of nine Colleges. The UGE and the nine Colleges have produced ten separate submissions for the 'light' reviews and the approaches adopted by each College</p>	4

	<p>appear to be different from one another.</p> <p>The GEF courses are commended for their design and contents. The majority of Colleges have laid out clear visions/missions in their CGE programmes.</p> <p>It was noted that some of the new Colleges have not yet admitted the first cohort of students. While the Panel is aware of the fact that UGE and the nine Colleges have unique histories and each has a unique character, the Panel would like to see a more coherent structure in place to oversee and coordinate the entire GE Programme.</p>	
4.	<p>Alignment with OBA initiatives</p> <p>Comments: A comprehensive planning in adopting OBA for GE is articulated in the OBA roadmap for GE and there are essentially three areas of work, curriculum alignment, continuous programme assessment and faculty development. The GE Programme appears to have incorporated the principles associated with OBA in developing the programme design and the programme design is seen to have basically aligned with the OBA roadmap for GE. The use of internal and external resources for the OBA plans is also reported.</p> <p>The mapping of courses against programme learning outcomes helps to provide clear reflection of the alignment of the programme design with the OBA roadmap. The Panel is pleased to note that most of the Colleges have constructed the learning outcome matrices. Members of the Panel are aware that some new Colleges are still at the formation stage, and therefore, less progress has been made in this regard. It is strongly suggested that all Colleges should work out similar learning outcome matrices to facilitate self-reflection.</p>	4
5.	<p>Outcomes statement</p> <p>Comments: The overall programme goals for the GE Programme as a whole and the learning outcomes for each of the three components, GEF, Four Areas of UGE and CGE have been spelt out clearly. Other than the common set of learning outcomes for CGE as provided in the Programme Proposal Warehouse (PPW), the four existing Colleges have also developed specific learning outcomes to reflect on their unique character. The new Colleges may consider developing their own learning outcomes to strengthen their identity as they progress further.</p>	4
6.	<p>Programme design. Feedback to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rationale behind design and student advising</i> • <i>List of courses and course descriptions, plus detailed study scheme (including required and elective courses)</i> • <i>Faculty Package — Integration and synergy with the Faculty Package, and the provision of enough breadth/ choice</i> <p>Comments: Under the four-year curriculum, the GE Programme is composed of three</p>	4

complementary components: GEF, Four Areas of UGE and CGE.

GEF is a programme of 2 compulsory courses specifically designed for the four-year curriculum to provide students with a common learning experience and solid foundation prior to the study of other UGE courses, with emphasis on essential attitudes and skills for independent learning. The two courses, *In Dialogue with Humanity* and *In Dialogue with Nature*, cover two different major domains of human knowledge and human conditions. The GEF was soft-launched in the 2010-11 academic year and the courses were well received by students. The text selections, themes for discussion and pedagogy have been further fine-tuned.

The UGE is delivered through more than 230 courses offered by over 40 teaching departments. Courses in UGE are grouped into four areas of human intellectual concerns, namely

Area A: Chinese Cultural Heritage

Area B: Nature, Science and Technology

Area C: Culture and Society

Area D: Self and Humanity

Students are exposed to a broad intellectual perspective as they are required to take at least one course from each of the four Areas. This breadth requirement equips students with different aspects of knowledge and an understanding of the values of different academic disciplines.

CGE is a unique feature of undergraduate education at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). It reinforces the mission and traditions of each constituent College. In 2012, there will be nine Colleges offering credit-bearing GE courses as well as non-credit-bearing learning opportunities. By providing students with a broad perspective that goes beyond academic pursuits, College GE places an emphasis on personal growth, realization of personal potentials, and contributes to the holistic development of students. The synergies between the Colleges may provide good practices and innovative ideas for the Colleges to further refine their programme design.

The Panel is glad to see that efforts have been made to address the concerns of the 2008 Review Report regarding the overlapping of course content among the GE courses and the issue of double-coded courses. A review of the GE courses was conducted to examine the overlapping of courses and courses identified to have overlapping were proposed to become mutually exclusive. A study on double-coded courses has been carried out and the findings show that there is no significant difference between single-coded and double-coded UGE courses in terms of satisfaction with course, satisfaction with teacher, student workload and appropriate level of difficulty. The GE Programme is advised to continue to review and monitor the courses to reduce redundancy and overlap. The UGE and CGE should seek further consultation with the partner departments to provide an optimal learning environment for offering double-coded courses to both major and non-major students. The University guidelines on course sharing may provide useful reference.

The Panel agrees that it is a challenge to coordinate over 40 departments in

	offering more than 230 courses. The OUGE may want to consider establishing a mechanism to achieve better coordination.	
7.	<p>Sample course outlines. <i>Feedback to include consideration of each type of course (inc. research or internship/ capstone experience) [add rows as needed]</i></p> <p>Comments: Variations in the sample course outlines provided by the various Colleges are noted. It is recommended that the course outlines should follow the University requirements to ensure consistency in format and terminologies. Essential components, such as learning outcomes, learning activities, assessment schemes, reading lists and the statements on academic honesty, should be included in all the course outlines.</p>	4
8.	<p>Learning activities. <i>Feedback to include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rationale</i> • <i>Workload considerations — Explanation of considerations</i> • <i>Learning technology — Intended use of technology</i> <p><i>There might be</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Experiential learning (EL) — How Programme’s learning activities dovetail with College, University and Programme EL</i> <p>Comments: A variety of learning activities are offered. The GEF will engage students in intensive discussion, reading and writing in small-class seminar. For the UGE courses, lectures and interactive tutorials will be the dominant activity. Field trips, group projects, web discussion forum may also be used as complementary learning activities. In the CGE courses, in addition to addressing first year transition issues, students will be involved in capstone experience, service learning or team project, or a combination of these activities.</p> <p>The CGE also includes non-credit-bearing components which consist of assemblies, high table dinners, high tea workshops, summer programmes and community services. These informal learning activities are stimulating. They also provide outside-of-classroom opportunities for students to enhance their experiential and service learning.</p>	4.5
9.	<p>Assessment scheme — <i>Rationale for the choice of assessment</i></p> <p>Comments: The GE courses use a range of assessment that assess different kinds of learning and do not rely solely on final examination or term paper. There will be at least one written component in the assessment, for example, paper, report or essay type question in the examinations. In the GEF, three major assessment methods will be used, including write-ups in response to the assigned texts, term papers and participation in seminar discussion.</p> <p>The Panel is pleased to note that grading criteria are developed to ensure</p>	3.75

	<p>consistent standard across sections. The Colleges are encouraged to consider more innovative and unconventional assessment methods to measure the learning outcomes of the informal learning activities, such as high table dinners and high tea workshops. When peer evaluation is considered, its methodology needs to be clearly specified.</p> <p>To encourage students to take up more challenging GE courses, the GE Programme may wish to explore the possibilities for courses which are more experiential in nature to have a pass-fail grading and to decide whether these courses will be contributing to the students' Grade Point Average (GPA).</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Challenges – Reflections on implementation challenges</p> <p>Comments: The Panel noted that the scale and importance of GEF as a common academic experience for all undergraduate students is unprecedented. In 2012, the two foundation courses will be offered to more than 3,500 entrants as GE compulsory. Early, thoughtful and substantial preparation is thus necessary for successful implementation. The major challenge is to recruit adequate teachers with interdisciplinary interest and concerns at the right time to meet the needs for the full launch in 2012.</p> <p>Since the OUGE is funded by staff establishment and not by full-load equivalence (FLE), an extremely tight staff headcount is given which requires each instructor to take up 12 classes (25 students each) in an academic year, that is, 6 classes (150 students) in one semester. With the heavy teaching load, the quality of teaching and learning might be compromised and it would be difficult to retain a team of dedicated teachers in the long run. The OUGE hopes that the University can work out some ways to reduce the teaching load to enable the teachers to participate in other academic activities and offer their own expertise to serve the University beyond GEF.</p> <p>With an increasing number of non-local students who do not speak Cantonese joining the University as full-time or exchange students, the Colleges may need to consider offering more GE courses in English so as to meet the needs of international students.</p> <p>Some Colleges have been very mindful of the challenges ahead and have already worked out careful plans to address the challenges. Yet a few Colleges appeared to be still at the stage of identifying challenges. It would be useful for all Colleges to reflect on challenges they will face in implementing their curriculum plans.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Other comments and overall reflection, including comments on alignment **</p> <p>The Panel is pleased to note that a lot of efforts and thoughts have been put in developing the GE Programmes for the new four-year curriculum. The Panel would like to see a formalized mechanism in place to coordinate the UGE and CGE. For instance, the establishment of a Standing Committee can be considered to oversee the coordination of all GE Programmes. As a vital and important element of CUHK's overall educational provision at the undergraduate level, it is necessary to have a rigorous quality assurance system to oversee the entire GE Programme. The</p>		

initiatives of the UGE and CGE to collaborate with each other in constructing a common framework for assessing student learning in the GE Programme as a whole, including the freshmen survey, final year student survey and alumni survey, were commended. This is viewed as a good start for more collaborative efforts to be forthcoming and a coherent model for GE at CUHK. The synergies between the UGE and the CGE may provide good practices and innovative ideas in refining their GE offerings.

* Items matched to those in the template for (programme) submission.

** Summative feedback across items 3 to 9.

Finalized in March 2012
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