

## THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

### **Goals and Roles Statement for General Education (GE) Programme**

Approved by SCGE at its First Meeting (2009-10)

#### **I. Background**

In accordance with the OBA roadmap for GE which was endorsed by SCGE in June 2008, OUGE has organized GE teacher retreat and core-group meetings for teachers to review and restate the overall goal of the GE Programme and the objectives of each of the four UGE areas and the GE Foundation Programme. The Colleges were consulted through a series of working meetings and the College GE role statements were worked by the Colleges, including the newly established ones.

The proposed GE goals are articulated with the attributes of ideal CUHK graduates as described in the Strategic Plan 2006 (annex 1). The goals are also in line with the GE objectives laid down by the GE Review Committee in 2003 (annex 2).

#### **II. Goals and Objectives of CUHK GE Programme**

General Education plays a vital role in the University's mission to provide a balanced undergraduate education for all students. General Education at CUHK aims to nurture students' personal development so they will become educated persons capable of taking up the challenges of an ever-changing world. It strives to equip students with the intellectual capacity for making informed judgment about issues, ideas, and values of humanity and of modern society. Preparing students to be lifelong learners and engaged citizens with a global awareness, it targets their growth as whole persons rather than specialists.

To achieve these goals, General Education at CUHK is designed to:

1. furnish students with a broad intellectual perspective for dealing with the unfamiliar;
2. engage students in active reflections on perennial issues, prompting them to make connections between intellectual pursuits and personal life at work, at home and in the community;
3. promote an understanding of Chinese cultural heritage and of other cultural traditions;
4. develop in students attitudes and skills that are conducive to critical thinking, self-expression and communication with the others;
5. serve as a platform where students can extend their curiosity, read widely beyond their chosen discipline, and develop attitudes and competence as independent learners and also as team players.

### **III. Roles of College GE**

College General Education is an important feature of undergraduate education at CUHK, designed as an expression of the unique mission, traditions, and resources of each constituent College. All Colleges offer credit-bearing General Education courses as well as non-credit-bearing learning opportunities, such as, assemblies, overseas learning tours, and various types of co-curricular activities. By providing students with a broad perspective that goes beyond academic pursuits, College General Education contributes to the holistic development of students to become responsible citizens of the world.

Although the academic curriculum varies among Colleges, the College General Education Programmes aim at nurturing students to explore their potential capabilities. In the freshman year, the programmes help students to adapt to university life and to appreciate the essential characteristics of university learning. Throughout the undergraduate years, a collegiate environment is provided to promote interaction among students and teachers from different academic disciplines and cultural backgrounds. Learning opportunities are created to enhance student communication skills and enable them to work in interdisciplinary teams.

### **IV. 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: the General Education Foundation (GEF) programme and the Four Areas of University GE.

#### **A. General Education Foundation (GEF) Programme**

The GEF programme aims to provide for students a common intellectual and cultural ground, on which sensitivity to the concerns of human existence may develop, and intellectual dialogues on these concerns may emerge. The GEF will be reading and writing intensive and taught in seminar style. It is designed to help students acquire and develop knowledge, attitudes and skills that are essential for independent learning, namely:

1. a knowledge of major ideas that shape the world today
2. an intellectual inquisitiveness when addressing issues related to their life and society
3. the willingness and capacity to examine new and different ideas
4. the ability to engage in intensive and close reading
5. the readiness to articulate their own ideas clearly and systematically in writing and in oral communication.

GEF consists of two compulsory courses, which engage students in dialogues on perennial concerns of human existence through the reading of classics.

## **B. The Four Areas of University GE**

Building upon the Foundation, the Four Areas further broaden students' exposure by inviting them to examine four fundamental realms of human concerns, namely, one's 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 Areas aim at:

1. enhancing students' ability to understand the context of contemporary issues from a complex and interdisciplinary perspective;
2. introducing students to basic concepts and methodology of different disciplines;
3. heightening their awareness of how different disciplines contribute to knowledge, and;
4. helping them understand how these disciplines address problems faced by the modern world.

Each area has its specific area objectives:

### **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;
4. recognize the relevance of Chinese cultures in modern life.

### **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;
5. appraise and evaluate the impact of science and technology on human life.

### **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;
4. apply theories studied to explain related issues.

### **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;
6. perform critical reasoning.