Second Round
Teaching and Learning Quality Process Review

Report on
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 **Taught Programmes**

1.1.1 **General Conclusions**

The Panel is pleased to report that the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) has made significant progress since the first round of TLQPRs, and commends the general emphasis on Education Quality Work (EQW) that is present on campus. Academic staff are generally enthusiastic and are moving toward a culture of learning, via initiatives and innovations associated with student-centred pedagogies. The institution as a whole is commended for the wide range of structural elements that have been put in place in support of moves to assure and improve the quality of teaching and learning on campus. The overall positive impression gained by the Panel derives mainly from the following specific elements:

(a) Introduction of the annual Business Plan / Quality Report procedures.

(b) The considerable commitment to EQW at unit level, and the relatively small variation across units, in this respect.

(c) The PolyU Strategic Objective 1.1 and the commitment of resources in support of this.

(d) The roles played by Deans in promoting EQW, and linking unit level activity with central strategic direction.

(e) The introduction of the Departmental Assessment (DA) and Departmental Academic Advisor (DAA) systems.

(f) The close links with the community that pervade various QA systems that are in place.

(g) The general education programme, that links well with the university’s strategic direction.

(h) The roles played by the Educational Development Centre (EDC) and other service units.

1.1.2 **Issues and Recommendations**

The directions in which PolyU is moving are very appropriate, and future efforts should be centred around self-critical reflection designed to improve further what is already in place. Some specific recommendations are outlined below:-

(a) Move to develop a culture of evaluation and critical enquiry in relation to the QA elements that have been put in place, e.g. DA procedures, the Annual Business Plan, etc.

(b) Review, and develop appropriately, the criteria associated with reports of quality reviews, the DA in particular.

(c) Review, and develop appropriately, the performance indicators that are used to guide reports on teaching and learning in departments and Faculties.

(d) Develop a stronger alignment between student assessment and intended learning outcomes.

(e) Further evaluate the General Education (GE) programme, to better understand and develop the ways in which the various general education components of the degree programme support and reinforce one another.

(f) Consider the implementation of differential allocation of a small proportion of one-line budget funding to units, on the basis of performance in relation to “learning culture” and EQW initiatives.

1.2 Research Postgraduate Education

Research Postgraduate Education (RPgE) has evolved rapidly in PolyU. Efforts have been directed at the administration of the area, from student admission to graduation, and there is now a sound system in place.

1.2.1 The Panel commends the priority that is given to supervision of RPg students, and the following two practical elements :-

(i) The system of co-supervisors;
(ii) The series of supervision workshops organised by EDC in conjunction with Research Committee.

Other commendable elements include :-

(iii) The formal study programme that each student is required to complete; and
(iv) “Confirmation of registration”, which is a key element at the midpoint of studies.

1.2.2 Recommendations for further development are as follows :-

(a) Move to make more use of evidence collected, in order to further develop and refine systems that are in place.

(b) Consider establishing a focussed, cyclical system of review (analogous to DA) that concentrates specifically on RPgE.
(c) Review the system (and current formula) for the allocation of RPg places.

(d) Consider establishing a Graduate School.

1.3 **Continuing Education**

There has been a rapid growth in continuing education provision, and three entities on campus contribute: the School of Professional Education and Executive Development (SPEED); the Hong Kong Community College (HKCC); and the Integrated Graduate Development Scheme (IGDS). Commendations and recommendations for these areas are contained in the main body of the Report. In outline, some of the main features are as follows:

1.3.1 SPEED is commended for the attention which is paid to the support of teachers, elements of the assessment procedures, and the effectiveness of programme teams.

Recommendations include:

(i) pay more attention to developing a learning-centred culture in its programmes;
(ii) consider ways in which SPEED could support self-financing diploma and graduate programmes.

1.3.2 HKCC is commended for its support of students and ensuring that they are fully integrated into campus life, and the support for new staff, its assessment procedures.

Recommendations include:

(i) develop a summative learning outcomes assessment process for AD graduates;
(ii) ensure that AD graduates’ learning outcomes articulate with the requirements of further degree programmes that they may enter;
(iii) move to develop a stronger focus on learning (as opposed to teaching).

1.3.3 IGDS is commended for the overall programme design and innovative delivery system, together with a comprehensive associated quality assurance system.

It is recommended that actions should be taken to reduce the time taken to mark and return assignments and grades to students.
2. **A Brief Background to the Second Round of TLQPRs**

Over the period September 1995 to April 1997 the University Grants Committee (UGC) carried out a programme of TLQPRs in the then seven UGC-funded institutions. The reviews were carried out as part of the on-going activities of UGC designed to assure quality and value for money. The stated goals of the reviews were as follows.

- To focus attention on teaching and learning as the primary mission of Hong Kong’s tertiary institutions
- To assist institutions in their efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- To enable the UGC and the institutions to discharge their obligation to maintain accountability for the quality of teaching and learning

Following the completion of the reviews, UGC commissioned an independent evaluation of the exercise that was carried out by the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) of the University of Twente in the Netherlands. Two aims of the evaluation were:

- To undertake an independent evaluation of the TLQPRs of the seven UGC-funded tertiary institutions in order to determine the extent to which the TLQPR process has achieved its stated goals.
- To recommend any improvements on the TLQPR process.

An evaluation report was published in September 1999. Broadly, it concluded that the TLQPRs had been successful in achieving the intended goals, and that “TLQPR was the right instrument at the right time”. A further round of TLQPR, continuing to focus on quality processes was also recommended. Following this, a special meeting of the Consultative Committee on TLQPR was convened, at which it was agreed that a Seminar would be organised as a follow-up to the CHEPS team’s evaluation of the TLQPR exercise.

The Seminar took place in April 2000, attended by a wide variety of UGC and UGC-funded institution representatives, together with invitees from other tertiary institutions and agencies in Hong Kong. The report of that Seminar concluded that: “Participants at the Seminar were positively disposed toward the prospect of a further round of TLQPR – which needs to be suitably modified and developed”. Accordingly, it was decided that a further round of TLQPR would take place and the template for the current round was developed in a dialogue between UGC and the Consultative Committee on TLQPR.

The second round TLQPRs commenced in October 2001. **Annex A** outlines the methodology that underpins the current reviews, as carried out within the template structure.
3. Major Overall Observations

3.1 General Conclusions

In the first round of TLQPRs, the Panel reported that there was “... considerable variation [in quality assurance processes relating to teaching and learning] among the operating units”, and that this appeared to be “a symptom of insufficiently broad and deep commitment to the University’s quality processes”. The current Panel is pleased to report that PolyU has made significant progress since the first round of TLQPRs. The “considerable variation” referred to in the first Report has been considerably reduced, and the Panel was impressed by and commends the general level of emphasis on EQW that is present on campus. At the unit level, academic staff are committed and enthusiastic and are moving toward a culture of learning (as opposed to an emphasis on teaching), together with the focus on student-centred pedagogies that this implies. The University is serious about quality assurance and improvement (QA&I) relating to teaching and learning, and a wide range of structural elements has been put in place: for this the institution is commended. The favourable impression outlined above derives from the specific elements that are outlined in the remaining paragraphs of this section.

3.1.1 The annual Business Plan / Quality Report processes and procedures help to foster a quality culture. The reports are thoroughly discussed, and there is an accountability structure within which actions on recommendations are monitored and supported.

3.1.2 There is a considerable commitment to EQW at the unit level, and – as already mentioned in the first paragraph - comparatively little variation in the quality of EQW efforts across the various units visited. The Panel encountered many good practices and innovations that are broadly designed to develop a learning culture.

3.1.3 PolyU has committed significant resources to the development of QA&I in teaching and learning, to generally good effect. Support for initiatives in support of its Strategic Objective 1.1, relating to the all-round development of students, has been especially influential, as has the funding of specific projects designed to improve teaching and learning, and the various support units on campus.

3.1.4 Deans are a strong link in the chain of influence vis-à-vis EQW that links central strategic direction with unit level activity. They take their responsibilities seriously and energetically promote and monitor associated activities. At the same time, there is room for Deans to be more active in promoting a learning, as opposed to a teaching, culture.

3.1.5 The Departmental Assessment (DA) and Departmental Academic Advisor (DAA) processes have the definite potential to become significant elements in facilitating a culture of learning on campus, but are not yet fully focussed on
the shift to a learning paradigm. The University is encouraged to continue to evaluate and develop these processes (See 3.2.2 below).

3.1.6 The close links with the community are an integral part of the University’s strengths, and these can be seen pervading various QA systems including the DA and DAA processes, links with employers and associated surveys, mentorships, internships, etc.

3.1.7 The University has a strong, extensive, and in many ways innovative general education programme that fits in well with the University’s strategic directions. Further evaluation of this programme would be useful, in order to better understand and develop the ways in which the various general education components of the overall degree programme reinforce and support each other.

3.1.8 The Panel commends the roles played by the various service units in supporting institutional and departmental initiatives. The Educational Development Centre (EDC) is particularly successful in being both proactive, and responsive to unit and institutional needs.

3.2 Recommendations

While there are many useful QA elements in place, these do not yet constitute a fully mature system at the institutional level. The directions in which PolyU is moving are appropriate, and future efforts should be focussed on continuing to evaluate and modify what is in place, in a self-critical manner. The paragraphs below elaborate on this general statement.

3.2.1 There is a need to develop a culture of evaluation and critical enquiry in relation to the various QA elements that have been put in place (e.g., DA, the annual Business Plan, etc.) so that they may continue to develop as an integral part of an overall quality system. There is room for further emphasis, at the institutional level, on ways in which the QA processes contribute to the sharing of good practices across campus. In some cases, there were hints that units may be simply complying with these elements rather than seeing them as an embedded part of their own efforts to improve teaching and learning.

The Panel notes that many of the elements referred to are comparatively new, and would encourage the institution in its intention to further develop these.

3.2.2 There is a need to re-visit the criteria associated with reports of quality reviews in particular the DA, and the ways in which these are applied. The headings for the criteria descriptions are broadly appropriate, but reports often do not mirror emphases on QA&I relating to teaching and learning, nor efforts to develop a learning (as opposed to a teaching) culture. There is a danger that the reviews may be “captured” by the more traditional emphases on curriculum, research, resources, etc, and special efforts will be needed to emphasize student learning and EQW, and to ensure that reviewers are selected appropriately and act in accordance with these emphases.
3.2.3 The performance indicators that are used to guide the reporting on departments and Faculties seem to be very sparse with respect to teaching and learning; essentially they are limited to student feedback data. The indicators could usefully be extended to include a wider range of evidence (some of which might be of a more qualitative nature) relating to teaching, learning and EQW.

3.2.4 While the shift in culture from teaching to learning is purposeful, and is becoming embedded in the discourse, further development is still needed. In particular, there needs to be a stronger alignment between methods of student assessment and intended learning outcomes. The Teaching Development Grants (TDGs) Project funded by UGC on constructive alignment that is underway on campus has considerable potential for steering the required developments.

3.2.5 Further evaluation of the GE programme would be useful, in order to better understand and develop the ways in which the various general education components of the overall degree programme reinforce and support each other.

3.2.6 The Panel notes that discretionary funding mechanisms are in place on campus, in the form of Project-based funding and Deans’ reserves. In addition it might be productive to implement differential allocation of a small proportion of one-line budget funding to units on the basis of their performance in relation to “learning culture” and EQW initiatives.

4. Observations Relating to the TLQPR Template Domains

4.1 Design of Curricula

Across the campus, curricula are continually developing in a responsive way, informed by feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders. Some of this development is incremental, while in other cases major curriculum reviews have been undertaken or are being planned. There is good contact between industry / professions / employers and the university units; the gathering of systematic feedback – and acting upon it – is the norm, and some programmes / units have established industry advisory bodies to assist in the process. There is an emphasis on out-of-class activity and real life learning experiences in most curricula, with the aim of placing knowledge in the context of work, that find practical expression through summer training placements, internships, and other forms of work placement.

All of this is broadly and appropriately in line with the emphasis in the university mission on developing professional competence in students. The other strategic emphasis, on the all-round development of students, is also apparent in curriculum design via two separate elements :-

(a) the inclusion of compulsory general education subjects in all programmes; and
(b) a developing emphasis on generic competences and attitudes (communication skills, global outlook, etc.) in subjects overall.

A further emphasis identified as appropriate by the Panel is the inclusion of a compulsory final year project in programmes; this serves as a capstone experience for students, enabling the integration of disparate programme elements and furthering the development of the generic competences already referred to. Finally, the Panel notes and commends the growing emphasis on Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approaches in curricula across the campus.

4.2 Design of Teaching and Learning Processes

While there is still some emphasis on more traditional methods of teaching, the Panel encountered a wide variety of new initiatives in teaching and learning methods across the units visited, with a general emphasis on :-

(a) student-centred and active learning, through approaches such as PBL, active learning studios, groups projects and presentations, simulations, etc.; and

(b) workplace learning experiences (already referred to in 4.1).

A further prominent feature is the use of web-based teaching methods across campus, as support for face-to-face teaching. This has been driven by both central policy (and support) and by the “MegaWeb” Project funded by TDGs.

The role played by EDC in organising a wide variety of workshops, lunchtime seminars, etc. has obviously been influential in promoting new initiatives on campus, as has its role in leading the so-called “umbrella” TDG Projects that have involved significant numbers of academic staff and led to the spread of new ideas across units. Supplementary to, and supportive of, this has been the central university funding of teaching and learning projects.

4.3 Design of Student Assessment and Use of Assessment Results

There is a mixture of continuous assessment and final examinations that characterizes the usual approach to student assessment, with on-course assessment constituting a greater proportion in the later stages of programmes. Project work is given heavy emphasis in most programmes, with much use of group projects. In association with these group projects, the Panel encountered several instances where student peer assessment is used as a component of the overall evaluation. In general students were enthusiastic about this.

Two examples of assessment methods that seem useful and worth noting are :-

(a) the use of student learning portfolios; and

(b) the use of open-book examinations.
Some units had made good efforts to align assessment methods with intended learning outcomes. However, while there are examples of good initiatives, there is still much room for the more systematic and constructive alignment of assessment methods with intended learning outcomes.

The technical aspects of assessment (moderation, check marking, etc.) are handled well across campus, and the DA system is positive and influential in ensuring the appropriateness of academic award standards. What is less common is the use of cohort assessment, and analysis of student work overall, as a source of data for the further development of curriculum and teaching and learning methods. Some good examples were encountered, but there is room for progress on a wider front.

### 4.4 Implementation Quality

Teaching and learning is taken seriously in PolyU, and a lot of energy and effort goes into ensuring the quality of these activities. As in most other contexts, there is a heavy emphasis placed on student feedback, via the Student Feedback Questionnaire (SFQ) surveys. A useful initiative has been the construction of Faculty–specific surveys, with each Faculty taking responsibility for the design of its survey forms. This has led to a greater sense of ownership, and the Panel is able to validate the fact that the feedback is treated seriously and used productively.

Other elements that contribute to a good and comprehensive system include the following:

(a) the graduate surveys, which are having an influence on quality work;

(b) the growing use and acceptance of Peer Review of teaching for both formative and summative purposes;

(c) the staff appraisal system;

(d) the staff / student consultative committees that seem to work very effectively;

(e) the system of Departmental Teaching and Learning Committees, which are influential in promoting and supporting EQW; and

(f) the collaboration between units and EDC in developing new initiatives, via both TDGs and workshops / consultative arrangements.

Finally in this Section, the Panel commends the comprehensive system of workshops and courses that are organised for:

- postgraduate students with teaching responsibilities.
- new / relatively inexperienced academic staff appointees.
4.5 Commitment of Resources to EQW

As a whole, academic staff commit significant amounts of their time to EQW, and this is generally supported by resources from the centre. In particular, units that are in place to support academic staff are well funded and generally well regarded. Additional central support (extra to the TDGs from the UGC) is available for specific projects and initiatives, and there is generally good physical infra-structure.

Deans’ reserves are one potential source for the support of quality initiatives relating to teaching and learning, and there is evidence of their productive use in this manner. There may be room for a more structured system of incentives for EQW at the unit level, and the recommendation of 3.2.6 relates to this point.

5. REPORT ON RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

5.1 General Observations

5.1.1 Research Postgraduate Education (RPgE) at PolyU has been in a state of rapid evolution. In the current year it has a UGC RPg allocation of 364 FTE places, which have been supplemented by student places that are supported by central university / external funding. In total the number of RPg students in PolyU is in excess of 500 FTEs.

5.1.2 RPgE is overseen by the PolyU Research Committee (RC), which is a large committee chaired by the Vice President (Research Development) and including all Deans as ex-officio members. The RC reports to the Senate. In addition to the central RC, each Faculty also has a Research Committee, whose chairman sits on the central RC. In turn, departmental Research Committees are responsible for the conduct of RPgE within each particular department.

5.1.3 RPg studentships are allocated to departments by the central RC. A 10% “top slice” of the total quota is used for university priorities, with the remainder allocated to departments according to a complex formula that takes into account:

- staff publications
- staff qualifications and research activity
- numbers of previous graduates and time to graduation
- funded / non-funded research projects
- “exceptional items”

The procedure tends to spread allocations across all academic units. There is a sound system in place for the administration of RPgE, from student admission to graduation.
5.1.4 The Panel commends the priority that is given to supervision of RPg students, together with the following elements that underpin this emphasis :-

(a) A system of co-supervisors is used in order to induct inexperienced staff, and / or when the focus of the research warrants this.

(b) A series of supervision workshops is organized by EDC, and new (and also more experienced) supervisors are strongly encouraged to attend these.

5.1.5 Other commendable aspects of the RPgE system include the following :-

(a) Each student completes a formal study programme.

(b) “Confirmation of registration” is a key evaluation at the mid-point of studies.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 It is pleasing to note that, in an effort to promote a culture of evidence driven development *vis-à-vis* RPgE, graduate and student feedback is being collected systematically via survey forms. However, it was not clear to the Panel what meanings were ascribed to the data collected, nor how this evidence affects actions. The University is encouraged to further develop this useful initiative in order to link the evidence more closely to subsequent actions.

5.2.2 While some units have derived benefits for RPgE from the Departmental Academic Advisor (DAA), the Departmental Assessment (DA) Reports seem to offer little of substance for RPgE. The University may wish to consider establishing a focussed, cyclical system of review (at Faculty or departmental level), with external representation, that focuses specifically on RPgE.

5.2.3 The University may wish to consider whether the system of allocation of RPg places according to the existent formula leads to optimal quality. While the formula does favour the strongest, most research active departments, it nevertheless spreads the allocations (thinly in some areas) across the whole campus. There is an argument for the strongest departments receiving a greater share. A step in this direction might involve the establishment of a pool of places allocated on the strength of the applicants.

5.2.4 The RC is a relatively large and representative body that is concerned with resources and the management of research on campus, as well as RPg student matters and pedagogical issues. PolyU could usefully consider the establishment of a Graduate School to focus more directly on matters concerned with quality assurance and improvement relating to RPgE.
6. Observations Relating to the TLQPR Template Domains

6.1 Design of Curricula

In 2001 the central RC implemented a Senate recommendation requiring MPhil students to complete 3 taught courses and PhD students 5 taught courses. The commendable intent was to provide students with a greater depth of knowledge in their chosen research area, as well as broader knowledge of complementary fields. Departments have had only two years to develop and adapt their curricula: some departments have made admirable progress, but few have established firm structures or guidelines to facilitate systematic pursuit of the Senate intent.

The programmes taken by students are highly individualized. Apart from “core” courses relating to research methods, and others concerned with disciplinary knowledge, students are strongly encouraged, and in some cases required, to take courses dealing with English communication skills. A further requirement is that all students who engage in teaching duties should take courses organized by EDC.

6.2 Design of Teaching and Learning Processes

There is a range of commendable initiatives that are being taken in various departments, including the following :-

(a) Assigning mentors to incoming students.

(b) Formation of a Postgraduate Student Committee, which organizes student research colloquia, and works to enhance RPgE quality.

(c) Provision of guided study courses, together with reading lists.

(d) Guided study tours.

It would be useful to establish a formal mechanism or structure in order to disseminate information about these initiatives across campus. A Graduate School (as suggested in 5.2.4) would have an obvious and useful role to play in this regard.

6.3 Design of Student Assessment and Use of Assessment Results

Processes for the assessment of students’ work appear to be sound, and in line with conventional good practice. PolyU requires two external examiners for MPhil and PhD students, and while this is of definite benefit for the maintenance of quality, difficulties in administration have sometimes resulted, with unduly long delays occurring. The central RC has addressed this problem, and is encouraged to continue to monitor the situation. Areas for commendation include the following.
(a) The serious and critical review of examiners’ reports by the Faculty RCs and the central RC.

(b) The requirement for annual progress reports.

The Panel also identified other examples of good practice at unit level, that might usefully be considered more generally; the final sentence of Section 6.2 is pertinent here.

6.4 Implementation Quality

The Panel identified a definite energy and enthusiasm for assuring and improving the quality of RPgE. In support of this, several departments have established units to focus specifically on RPg students and their support. Specific arrangements include:

- Appointment of a “Director of Research Studies”
- Appointment of a separate RPg Advisor
- Establishment of a separate RPg Sub-Committee of the Departmental Research Committee (DRC)

Other examples of good practices occurring in some units include:

(a) establishing teams of junior and senior supervisors in “mentoring” arrangements;

(b) engaging in annual workshops with an overseas partner university, to focus specifically on the sharing of ideas relating to the support of RPg students; and

(c) mentoring and support of RPg students in their teaching/tutoring roles.

6.5 Commitment of Resources to EQW

In addition to the time spent by staff in implementing the practices described in the previous paragraphs, there are material resources available to support students for conference attendance and presentations, as well as earmarked funds for each student to purchase equipment, consumables etc. required for the research project.

7 REPORT ON CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS

7.1 General Background

Continuing Education activities at PolyU fall under the auspices of the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE) which oversees two separate units:
(a) The School of Professional Education and Executive Development (SPEED), which offers a variety of programmes and short courses, including those that lead to PolyU SPEED academic awards and/or articulate with regular PolyU awards under a credit accumulation mechanism.

(b) The Hong Kong Community College (HKCC), which is currently offering 5 Associate Degree programmes to a total of about 900 students, with the intention of expanding to a student enrolment of about 3,000 by 2008/09.

Both units are housed in a Professional Complex on campus, constructed from non-UGC funded resources. By 2008/09 it is intended that HKCC will have its own campus.

An Academic Board of CPCE oversees all academic matters relating to the programmes under its aegis, and essentially plays the same roles – and has the same relations with PolyU’s Senate – as a Faculty Board in respect of QA&I. Within this structure, both SPEED and HKCC are headed by a Director, who each report to the Dean of CPCE.

In carrying out the review, Panel members visited SPEED and HKCC, and also the Integrated Graduate Development Scheme (IGDS). The last is a programme that is operated as a joint degree programme with the University of Warwick.

7.2 Comments Relating to the TLQPR Domains for SPEED

Design of curricula for SPEED programmes is informed by the systematic collection of feedback and advice from industry, and also by consultations with the appropriate academic departments within PolyU.

Design of teaching and learning processes is a strong element. There is an emphasis on active learning, including the use of case-studies together with a heavy emphasis on team-work among students. Guest lecturers are also used frequently.

Design of student assessment and use of assessment results follows a conventional pattern for such units, with a mix of end of course and continuous assessment. There is an emphasis on project work, in terms of both individual and group assignments. Technical matters relating to the award of grades are handled well, and a Committee moderates student grades. There is little evident emphasis on the alignment of assessment with intended student learning outcomes, and room for considerable development of this aspect. In addition, the assessed achievement of student cohorts, and analysis of student work could be used much more to inform curriculum, and teaching and learning development.
Implementation quality draws on a variety of information and procedures including the following:

- Multiple surveys of students, together with actions based on these, together with an active staff/student consultative committee.
- Peer review visits to classes.
- An induction course, and teaching development workshops (offered in conjunction with EDC) for new teaching staff.

The Departmental Assessment (DA) for SPEED that has just been completed also has the potential to be significant in this respect: however, see recommendation (a) below.

Commitment of resources to EQW is quite high in terms of staff time and effort, and there is an evident high level of caring for students among staff, together with a strong sense of community. In addition, the significant resources used in providing a designated building on campus adds to the sense by students that they are “cared for”.

Areas of particular commendation include:

(a) The peer review class visits to support teachers;
(b) The examination and grade moderation scheme; and
(c) The effectiveness of programme teams.

Recommendations are as follows:

(a) The first round DA focussed primarily on issues of resources and leadership. There is a need for SPEED to go further than this in grappling with ways to develop a more learning-centred culture in its programmes.
(b) There is a need to address ways in which SPEED could play a role in supporting self-financing diploma and graduate programmes.

7.3 Comments Relating to the TLQPR Domains for HKCC

Design of curricula is very much influenced by the primary aim of preparing graduates from the AD programmes for further study. In line with this, feedback and advice from academic departments within PolyU (and other universities in Hong Kong) is influential in shaping the design of curricula.

Design of teaching and learning processes is informed by feedback from students that is gathered by systematic surveys and also the outcomes of staff/student consultative committee meetings. Some particular developments worth noting are:
• All students are assigned a personal tutor
• The use of WebCT for all courses
• Workshops are offered to support and develop student learning
• The “read aloud” campaign

Design of student assessment and use of assessment results follows normal university lines, with a balance between continuous assessment and final examinations. The examination and course moderation schemes work very effectively. There is little by way of using student cohort assessment to inform further curriculum development of the modification of teaching and learning methods.

Implementation quality is ensured in a number of ways, including benchmarking against other universities for the purpose of articulation, and ensuring a smooth transition of graduates into their degree programmes. There is a heavy emphasis on end of course feedback from students, and EDC was commissioned to conduct a review after the first year of operation of the AD programmes.

Commitment of resources to EQW is actioned in two ways. The first involves the significant usage of time and effort in gathering feedback and carrying out subsequent actions; the second involves the material resources that have been expended in providing a dedicated on-campus facility.

Areas of particular commendation include :-

(a) The arrangement for ensuring that students have full use of university facilities;

(b) The quality of, and support for, new staff leads to a good sense of community;

(c) The very thorough and effective examination and course moderation schemes; and

(d) The support and concern showed toward students.

Recommendations are as follows :-

(a) Develop a summative outcomes assessment process for graduates, to evaluate the extent to which intended learning outcomes are being achieved.

(b) Move to ensure that students’ learning outcomes on AD programmes articulate with requirements for further degree studies at PolyU and other universities.

(c) As yet there is not a strong focus on learning; this could usefully form the focus for the next stage of development.
7.4 Comments Relating to the TLQPR Domains for IGDS

Design of curricula is determined by the “base” modules that have been developed by the partner university and suitably modified by PolyU to fit the local context. There is an extensive and thorough review process, that promotes – among other aspects – the ongoing development of curriculum.

Design of teaching and learning processes is innovative, and emphasises the applied industrial nature of the programmes. There are different module design templates, with each requiring 40 contact hours, over different configurations of days. Each module has an extensive range of specially designed learning resources including case-studies, industrial applications, and Web support. A major Project is a mandatory requirement, and is supported by both an academic and an industry supervisor for each student.

Design of student assessment and use of assessment results: There is an extensive structure that ensures the assessment of outcomes of all activities during the programme. Assessment of the final Project receives especially intensive attention. Overall, all assessment is subject to thorough moderation.

Implementation quality is built into the programme design, and this is supplemented by formal periodic review. The programme was subject to a validation review before it was implemented, and a follow-up review took place in 2002. In addition, the programme is included in the DA of the host department.

Commitment of resources to EQW is quite significant, and is demanded by the essential design of the programme and the requirements of the overseas partner university. Good infra-structure support is provided by the PolyU and the host department. Staff from the host PolyU department teach on the programme as consultants, extra to their “normal” workload.

Areas of particular commendation include :-

(a) The overall programme design, which is very consistent with its intended outcomes;

(b) The innovative delivery system;

(c) The system of multi-layered quality assurance and moderation; and

(d) It should be noted that PolyU has joint degree awarding authority with the partner university (the University of Warwick), an authority that has been granted only to PolyU world-wide, and this is a reflection of the status and contribution of PolyU.

A recommendation is as follows:

(a) Move to reduce the time taken to mark assignments and return grades and feedback to students; currently this can take up to several months.