



## Learning and Teaching Committee

### Guidelines for Good Practices in Continuous Assessment

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The PolyU Students' Union (SU) conducted a survey in mid-2008 on students' experience of continuous assessment in their subjects. Based on the findings, SU requested the University to address the following two issues:
  - (a) The criteria for grading the assessments should be made transparent to students.
  - (b) The grades and feedback on the assessments should be returned to students in time, and in any case, before the final examination.
- 1.2 The University considers SU's requests appropriate, as both practices can help students learn more effectively. The University therefore urges academic staff to take heed of students' concerns, and invites LTC to provide staff with a set of guidelines for good practices. The following are suggestions from LTC.

#### 2. Making assessment criteria and standards of performance explicit to students

- 2.1 The criteria and standards of assessment should be made clear to students when the assignment is given. This will help students learn more effectively and avoid any possible disputes over fairness of the assessment.
- 2.2 Teachers should also help students understand what the different levels of performance mean. One easy way to do this is to ask students to discuss the performance of a range of students' work.

#### 3. Providing timely feedback to students on their work

- 3.1 Teachers should provide students with comments on their performance, in addition to the grades.
- 3.2 Since feedback is particularly useful when students' memory about their work is still fresh, teachers should adhere as far as possible to the following timeframe in providing feedback to students:
  - (a) Grades and feedback should be returned to students as soon as possible (e.g. not later than a month), and in any case, before the final examination.
  - (b) If the assessment is close to the final examination (e.g. two weeks before exam) and it is difficult to return feedback to individual students, teachers can provide comments on students' common errors either verbally or through email prior to the final examination. At the same time, teachers should let students know when they will receive their individual results of the assessment.

Note: Teachers can find more ideas and examples of setting up criteria and providing feedback in the "Guidelines for implementation of criterion-referenced assessment" developed by LTC. (<https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/edc/staff/CRAguidelines.pdf>).