

## Project Overview

Project Title (in English):

**A Project to Integrate Internship Learning into Curriculum**

Project Title (in Chinese):

優化實習計劃：職場體驗納入課程

### Executive Summary

In The Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK), including Li Ka Shing Institution of Professional and Continuing Education (LiPACE), only a few disciplines require mandatory placements as part of the curriculum. Generally speaking, internship is seen as voluntary and non-credit bearing – something extra to the curriculum. In view of the many challenges faced by different stakeholders, the existing funding proposal is to establish a sustainable delivery of an enhanced internship scheme, with more job opportunities and better quality of internship learning that can develop students' employability skills and competence. Major components of the project include:

#### **1. Expanded network with and better support for employers**

With strategic marketing campaigns, we will expand our network with employers to nurture more industrial partners for more job opportunities. Besides, a tools kit will be made available for the work supervisors to enable them to offer intended supervision and guidance for our students.

#### **2. Feedback analysis to design a structured internship course conducted in blended learning mode**

In order to integrate the real world learning with the curriculum, our long-term vision is to offer internship as a credit-bearing elective course that guides students all the way from preparing for to learning from the internship. A credit-bearing course will ensure resources appropriation to cover the staffing cost and ensure student commitment. Employability will be formally articulated and assessed as learning outcomes.

The Project will involve both career service practitioners from Student Affairs Office (SAO) and academics from different Academic Teaching Units. We will collaborate to design and pilot an "Internship Learning Course" (tentative course title). It is to be delivered in blended learning mode, combining classroom training, individual consultation, small group workshops and on-line learning. The course will spread over at least two terms, pre-placement preparation in the first term, allowing enough time for students to land an internship offer. Part two of the course will commence with the placement. Such a course will be piloted in the second year of the project. With more intensive review of the internship, tapping feedback from supervisors and students, we will refine the course content and the scaffold resources to maximise the learning outcomes.

By the end of the project, the infrastructure and the course materials so developed will be ready for deliberation in the Senate as a credit-bearing elective course. It will be a course on the development of employability skills and competence. If offered to a class of heterogeneous background, the connection between the internship and discipline will be facilitating the process of reflection. Academic Teaching Units are also welcome to introduce more discipline-specific contents if possible.

For those students who are not formally engaged in the above mentioned course, open sessions of individual modules will still be made available to support all students to learn from the work experience though in a less intensive way.

## **Problems Identified**

### **Problems encountered by academics**

Academic Teaching Units vary widely in internship management experience. Some Academic Teaching Units may initiate to contact employers and nominate students for internships. Some are more accommodating and willing to make ad hoc measures to facilitate internships on a case-by-case basis. Some may be less flexible. In any case, as students are taking on internships of different nature and duration, in business settings of different scales and in different locations, etc., the management of all the idiosyncratic placements is extremely labour intensive. Academic Teaching Units do not have manpower to support students to secure internship or learn from the work experience. Besides, much of the learning at work relates to students' attitude and generic transferrable skills. Academic Teaching Units may find such learning outcomes beyond the disciplines they are teaching.

### **Problems encountered by employers**

OUHK's image of distance-learning may be so strong that most employers are not readily aware of the availability of undergrads as interns. Recruitment patterns of potential employers vary widely as well. There are big companies well prepared to receive interns by cohorts. There are employers who deliberately create summer job posts, while some small business may only take interns on a part-time basis or for short-term projects. Publicity to employers will have to be more diversified and strategic in order to create more real world opportunities for students. Moreover, employers are hesitant to recruit interns: some may be sceptical of the value added by interns and some are concerned that the extra guidance and supervision expected may be huge workload.

### **Problems encountered by students**

Students are very keen to seek summer or part-time jobs. However, the motivation of employability enhancement may not be necessarily high. Students' competing priorities are many. As internship is voluntary, extra-curricular and non-credit bearing, students are reluctant to take on any jobs that will delay their normal academic progression. Students are not too keen to engage in jobs without pay or competitive jobs that will entail a long and tough selection process.

Students are by and large unprepared for internship experience. Some may fail to secure very meaningful jobs. Some may miss most of the possible learning gains as they are not aware of their role as a reflective practitioner. Even with those few conscientious ones, they may find themselves alone in facing the real world without any support.

### **Problems encountered by Student Affairs Office (SAO)**

Since 2015, SAO has launched the "Career Success Scheme (CSS)". It is to better prepare students to secure pre-graduation job experience. Constrained by manpower, we can only manage to engage around 100 students in pre-placement training and there is hardly any further support during their placement off-campus.

Considering the many challenges faced by different stakeholders, our proposal offers relevant support to the different parties at different junctures.

Project Objectives and Deliverables		
Measurable Objectives		How it can be achieved
1.	Expand internship opportunities for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulate aggressive marketing strategies, both locally and offshore, through collaboration of the academic staff and career service personnel.</li> <li>• A marketing manual will be developed to encompass all the diverse needs of different sectors and different locations.</li> <li>• With strategic marketing campaigns, we will expand our network with employers to nurture more industrial partners for more job opportunities.</li> <li>• A tools kit will be developed to enable employers to manage internships with ease and thus increase their interest in offering internship positions for our students.</li> <li>• With the experience gained from the Project, we can even customise the tools according to different types of employers/sectors or introduce authentic discipline- and/or sector-specific contents.</li> </ul>
2.	Maximise the learning through the internship	<p>A course -- “Internship Learning Course”(tentative course title), is designed and offered to students before the placement, enhance their placement hunting skills and guide them to be a reflective practitioner at work, integrating academic learning and developing the employability skills intentionally.</p> <p>A set of feedback guidelines and assessment rubrics will be developed to facilitate students’ learning and articulation of learning outcomes. Again, contents will be customized for different disciplines and/or sectors as far as possible.</p>
3.	Making the managing, teaching and learning during placement period manageable	Email / SMS and/or alerts using the existing Online Learning Environment will be sent to students to remind them of the critical tasks to complete at different milestones. Students can consult academic staff or internship officers for trouble-shooting. They will be guided to reflect and submit their periodic logs/reports of internship for assessment.

Project Deliverables		
Deliverables		
Sharing mechanism		
1.	Interface with employers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing manual</li> <li>• Tools kit for internship supervisors/mentors at work</li> </ul>	1. All the materials are so prepared to make “Internship Learning Course” ready to be offered as a credit-bearing elective. The set of documentation will be fully accessible by academics who may wish to adapt the contents and introduce the course in their Academic Teaching Units
2.	Instruction materials for “Internship Learning Course” developed in collaboration with academics and career service practitioners: <p>A. Materials to be delivered in blended learning mode</p> <p>1. Pre-internship career education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal stock-taking</li> <li>- Career planning</li> <li>- Employers’ expectation</li> <li>- Employability and pre-internship self-assessment</li> </ul> <p>- Preparing the job hunting package</p> <p>2. Workshops during job-hunting season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resume clinic</li> <li>- Mock interview</li> <li>- Individual consultation for students with special needs</li> </ul> <p>3. E-Learning materials during internship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workplace etiquette</li> <li>- Orientation to the job</li> <li>- Learning contract with work supervisor</li> <li>- Reflection of experience and observation at work</li> <li>- Interim feedback session with supervisor</li> <li>- Self-assessment of work performance and improvement plan</li> <li>- Post internship report and assessment of employability</li> </ul> <p>B. Generic criterion-referenced assessment rubrics</p>	2. Articles/Reports sharing our experience and case study will be published and share with practitioners both locally and worldwide.
		3. Sharing sessions and workshops for stakeholders: the academics, employers and practitioners in peer institutions.
		4. Sharing sessions of senior students who have completed the “Internship Learning Course” to junior students contemplating internship.
		5. Will initiate to form a Working Group to explore the collaboration amongst self- financing institutions.
1. Articles /Reports that we published		
2. Materials used in the sharing sessions/workshops		

<b>Beneficiaries</b>	
Expected type and number of beneficiaries of the project	~9,500 (Appendix 1) 2,600 interns ( 1,000 after the first year; 1,600 after the second year )
<p>All full-time undergraduate and sub-degree students will benefit from the scheme, though at varying degree of engagement intensity.</p> <p>(1) <b>Job Opportunities:</b> Subsequent to the enhanced marketing, more opportunities will be generated and all students can be benefitted. They can access the recruitment information of internship posts and the background of the employers as well. Industrial Partners who are willing to groom interns will have priority in selecting the most motivated candidates who have registered for the course.</p> <p>(2) <b>Preparation for Internship:</b> Students registered for the Internship Learning Course will have to follow and complete all the required preparatory modules and enjoy intensive support like individual consultation and review of their job hunting behaviours. Open sessions of individual modules of internship preparation e.g. job hunting skills and learning at work will be made available to all students.</p>	

<b>Implementation Schedule</b>		
Estimated start date of the project (month/year)		December 2016
Estimated end date of the project (month/year)		November 2018
Project duration (months)		24 months
<b>Month</b>	<b>Key milestones</b>	
	<b>In terms of project activities and deliverables</b>	<b>In terms of monitoring and evaluation</b>
1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit Project staff members</li> <li>Work with academics to come up with sector-specific and aggressive marketing strategies</li> <li>Outreach to potential employers both locally and offshore for industrial partners to create more internship opportunities.</li> <li>Visits to employers will be conducted to understand their concerns and needs so that our marketing and supporting can be more tailor-made accordingly</li> <li>Launching Pre-placement Preparatory modules for students intending to take up summer jobs</li> </ul>	<p><u>Monitoring and evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project In-charge will meet the Project Implementation Team to monitor the progress and give advices.</li> <li>Conduct bi-monthly evaluation meeting for the project to monitor the progress of the project.</li> </ul>
7-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will have to make an effort to land a job offer with all the support in job hunting skills enhancement</li> <li>Support during placement will be offered by e-mail and/or the existing Online Learning Environment. The experience gained will serve as the basis for content development and course materials of the "Internship Learning Course"</li> <li>Internship Officers and academic staff will make visits to employers on site to better understand the real problems encountered which will be useful for development of the Tools Kit for work</li> </ul>	<p><u>Monitoring and evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project In-charge will meet the Project Implementation Team to monitor the progress and give advices.</li> <li>Feedback from students will be collected.</li> <li>Conduct bi-monthly evaluation meeting for the project to monitor the progress of the project.</li> </ul>

	<p>supervisors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First draft of the course materials and relevant documentations for different stakeholders should be completed towards the end of autumn term.</li> <li>• To launch the beta version of “Internship Learning Course” as a non-credit bearing course.</li> </ul>	
13-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of internship stories from both students and employers to identify good practices</li> <li>• Engagement of good industrial partners to strengthen relationship</li> <li>• Enhanced marketing efforts launched with more showcases to share</li> <li>• Launch of publicity for the “Internship Learning Course” amongst Year II students</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Monitoring and evaluation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Project In-charge will meet the Project Implementation Team to monitor the progress and give advices.</li> <li>• Feedback from students will be collected.</li> <li>• Conduct bi-monthly evaluation meeting for the project to monitor the progress of the project.</li> </ul>
19-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course will start to be delivered.</li> <li>• Students will be supported to look for internships and land job offers before summer term.</li> <li>• Collection of students’ interim feedback from employers and trouble shoot issues identified</li> <li>• Collection of final reports after the internship. Such reports will be reviewed partly as assessment and partly for insights to enhance the teaching materials</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Monitoring and evaluation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Project In-charge will meet the Project Implementation Team to monitor the progress and give advices.</li> <li>• Feedback from students and employers will be collected.</li> <li>• Conduct bi-monthly evaluation meeting for the project to monitor the progress of the project, the analysis reports, employers’ feedback, and students’ feedback.</li> <li>• Project In-charge will lead the Project Team to prepare the report.</li> </ul>

**Publicity Plan**

1. **Publicity to public:** Key objectives of the project and the support of Quality Enhancement Support Scheme will be clearly stated in the University website and the printed materials of project for students, employers, academics and the general public throughout the duration of the project.
2. **Publicity to all students:** The launch of the project will be announced to the students through the University Newsletter “OpenLink” and the University website. In addition, publicity materials such as brochures, leaflets, banners, posters and plastic folders will be produced to promote the Scheme throughout the project.

3. **Publicity to potential students:** Staff of project team will give a briefing session about the project and services to all new enrolled students during the new students' orientation ceremony.

Cash Flow and Budget				
Project Expenditure				
	Amount in HK\$			
Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Manpower	2,982,500	3,072,000		6,054,500
Equipment / Facilities	511,500	550,000		1,061,500
Services	300,000	300,000		600,000
General Expenses	0	0		0
Others (e.g. auditor's fee)	110,000	141,480		251,480
<b>Total</b>	3,904,000	4,063,480		7,967,480
Project Income (if any, e.g. fees received)				
	Amount in HK\$			
Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
<b>Total</b>				
Grant Sought under the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme			HK\$7,967,480	
Funding from the Applicant			HK\$0	
Funding from Other Sources			HK\$0	
<b>Total Project Value</b>			<b>HK\$7,967,480</b>	
Post	Duties			
1 X Senior Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To lead and coordinate the project as Project Manager;</li> <li>● To oversee the marketing strategy and implementation</li> <li>● To work out strategies in sourcing for job opportunities overseas</li> <li>● To oversee the system development of the e-learning platform</li> <li>● To monitor the progress in course development and instructional design</li> <li>● To set up a systematic plan to collect evidence for quality management</li> </ul>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To regularly and proactively collect user feedback and look for improvement measures</li> <li>● To report regularly the progress and achievement outcomes of the project to senior management</li> <li>● To act as the Marketing Director</li> <li>● To draw up a comprehensive and co-ordinated marketing strategy and plan after consultation with representatives from Academic Teaching Units (Schools and LiPACE)</li> <li>● On top of the traditional advertising channels, to identify innovative ways e.g. through social media, to reach out to employers</li> <li>● To design and produce marketing kits for both local and overseas potential employers</li> <li>● To set targets by stages in different sectors and nature of posts to ensure a desirable supply of job opportunities</li> <li>● To visit different Chambers of Commerce, Business Associations, Employers' Associations to explain our vision and solicit their support</li> <li>● To collect concerns of employers and feedback from supervisors for case study, success stories and materials for the scaffold resources for supervisors</li> <li>● To launch events with employers to reinforce the brand images of the employers and the project as well</li> </ul>
<p>4 X Executive Officer II</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To help implement the project under the supervision of the Project Manager</li> <li>● Each of the EOII will have a designated Academic Teaching Units (Schools and LiPACE), working hand in hand with the corresponding representative of the unit</li> <li>● To visit potential employers of their unit focus to generate positive responses</li> <li>● To have close contacts with industrial partners for the recruitment need, relevant support and trouble-shooting</li> <li>● To facilitate the recruitment and selection of interns</li> <li>● To conduct pre-placement training for students of their corresponding unit focus</li> <li>● To manage interns during the internship period by all means</li> <li>● To collect feedback from stakeholders and feed the materials for development of marketing and course materials relevant to the unit focus</li> <li>● To facilitate senior students with internship learning experience to share their stories with students contemplating internship</li> <li>● To collect user feedback and trouble-shooting</li> <li>● To assist in the data analysis</li> <li>● To prepare the interim report and final assessment on students' performance in the internship</li> </ul>

## **Project Sustainability**

The sustainability of an internship scheme critically depends on whether we can articulate the value it adds to the learning outcomes of students' employability skills and competence. If the Internship Learning Course can be endorsed by the Senate to become a credit-bearing course, it will ensure appropriation of resources to the management and facilitation of learning before, during and after the placement.

A credit-bearing course will be in a better position to solicit the commitment from students as their performance at work and articulation of learning outcome is critical. With more evidence of the enhanced competitiveness of those students who have taken the course, demand of the course will be sustained. The cost of staffing for delivering the course will be HK\$500,000 annually which will be borne by OUHK.

The positive effect of the marketing campaigns will increase the brand image of the internship programme and enable us to expand our employer network. The efforts we invest in working with industrial partners will strengthen the relationship positively. It will help our sourcing for job opportunities in the subsequent years without incurring a lot of resources.