

Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme

Final Evaluation Report

Project No. : 05/QEGS/A-08-09

Part A

Project Title : Online student support service: Design and development of a career guidance kit for students in the self-financing post-secondary sector in Hong Kong


Name of Grantee : School of Professional and Continuing Education, The University of Hong Kong


Project Period : From May 2009 (month/year) to May 2012 (month/year)

Part B

Please use separate A4-size sheets to provide an evaluation of the Project with regard to the following aspects:

1. Project activities contributing to the attainment of Project objectives, extent of attainment of the objectives, evidence or indicators attesting to the attainment of the objectives, and if applicable, reasons for not able to achieve the objectives.
2. Impact or benefits of the Project to the participants, the target institution(s) or the sector.
3. Cost-effectiveness of the Project against clear indicators, e.g. utilization of available resources, unit cost per beneficiaries, sustainability of Project activities/impacts, applicability of Project outcomes/deliverables to other institutions, or alternative approaches for equivalent benefits at less cost, etc.
4. Outcomes and deliverables of the Project.

Signature: 

Organization Chop: 

Name of Authorized Person: Prof. Enoch C.M. Young


Name of Grantee
Organization: School of Professional and Continuing Education, The University of Hong Kong

Position of Authorized Person:

Special Adviser to Director, HKU SPACE; Chief Adviser, HKU SPACE Centre for Research in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning

Date:

27 AUG 2012



Quality Enhanced Grant Scheme (*Education Bureau, HKSAR Government*)

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(Project No.: 05/QEGS/A-08-09)

Grantee: HKU SPACE

Final Evaluation Report

Introduction

HKU SPACE was granted EDB QEGS funding to conduct a research project on assisting sub-degree and degree students and graduates for career planning. The three-year project was successfully completed as scheduled.

Project objectives

The primary objective of this project was to provide a systematic career guidance kit for students to prepare for, enter, and graduate from sub-degree, degree, and top-up degree programmes in the self-financing post-secondary sector in Hong Kong.

There are five major target goals:

- Develop an intelligent online programme preference assessment to help potential students understand their personal career interests and abilities in order to make a wise programme choice that could match their personal attributes.
- Conduct case studies on successful career experiences from outstanding graduates, and develop an online database on career experience-sharing for students in the self-financing post-secondary sector in Hong Kong.
- Collect and classify educational and job information and develop a comprehensive online database for sub-degree, degree, and top-up degree graduates of the self-financing post-secondary sector in Hong Kong.
- Develop an online kit on job-gaining skills, including career development, career planning, resume writing, interview preparation, and interview skills.
- Establish an online platform which accommodates all online programme preference assessment and database information mentioned above for students, parents, teachers, and career counsellors to use free of charge.

Upon completion of the project, the following five major outcomes have been achieved:

- An online psychological test that helps students understand oneself and provides suggestions of subjects for their reference was established in mid 2010.
- Case studies of nominated outstanding sub-degree and degree graduates and their success stories were conducted and published.

- A career guidance handbook which provides precise information about further studies and first-job seeking preparations was published in printed and electronic version.
- A website to share the project outcomes with the public free of charge was launched.
- An open workshop for students, teachers, career masters and counsellors was held following completion of the project.

The project was completed according to the scheduled time by stages.

Stage 1 (2009-2010)

Establishment of Online Test of Academic Programme Preference Assessment (APPA)

The primary objective of developing an intelligent online assessment test was to help potential students understand their characters, interests and abilities in order to make a wise programme choice that could match their personal attributes. The assessment test was prepared through the following steps.

Establishment of a programme database that contains all self-financed sub-degree, degree and top-up degree programmes offered in Hong Kong

At the initial stage, all the information of local sub-degree, degree and top-top degree programmes was collected from various self-financing educational institutions. Relative information was retrieved from the Information Portal for Accredited Self-financing Post-secondary Programmes (iPass) website (www.ipass.gov.hk).

A list of 29 institutions (**Appendix 1**) as shown in the iPass offering self-financing programmes were included. There are seven types of programme: (i) Foundation Diploma, (ii) Pre-Associate Degree; (iii) Associate Degree; (iv) Higher Diploma; (v) Advanced Diploma; (vi) Professional Diploma; and (vii) Bachelor Degree. Information about these programmes was summarized into our database including (i) institution names; (ii) programme names; (iii) programme types; (iv) modes of delivery; (v) areas of study and training; (vi) normal programme duration; (vii) exit award; and (viii) contact information. The accuracy of this information was emphasized as it will serve as a subject recommendation tool for students' reference via an assessment test described later.

The programme database was updated from time to time. As of July 2009, the number of programmes collected was 572, and following several updates, the number of programmes as at August 2012 was 585.

Classification of programmes offered by self-financed post-secondary sector in Hong Kong

With reference to the iPASS programme classification, the collected programmes were classified into 261 subject areas (**Appendix 2**), which were then further classified into 20

categories (**Appendix 3**) according to the areas of study and training of their core curricula. The classification was completed by 14 August 2009 as scheduled.

With the information collected and classified, programmes leaders nominated by Heads/Principals of institutions that offered self-financed programmes in Hong Kong were invited to provide ratings of personality requirement for each subject categories. Individual invitation letters along with a subject rating form and an instruction sheet were sent by e-mail and post in November 2009 to relevant programme leaders to rate the programmes .

The programme leaders were invited to rate the subjects in their expertise relative to nine attributes on a scale of 0 to 9. The nine personal attributes were Organizational, Mechanical, Scientific, Sociological, Mathematical, Literacy, Musical, Aesthetic and Social Service. A rating of "0" means the personal attribute is not a necessary requirement for the subject; while "9" means the personal attribute is the most needed requirement for the subject. The rating was completed in December 2009.

Establishment of Inventory for Academic Programme Preference Assessment (APPA)

Following the establishment of the programme list, the "Academic Programme Preference Assessment" (APPA) was set up with the aim of assisting students to understand their personal career interests and abilities better and therefore be able to make a wise programme choice that matches their personal attributes. The APPA was modified from the Academic Programme Preference Inventory (APPI) formerly established by the Centre for Research in Distance & Adult Learning at the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) and Hok Yau Club in 2004 under a research project funded by the Education and Manpower Bureau. It consists of 112 questions and was designed to measure students' personalities, abilities and interests. Since its establishment, it was linked in the website of Hok Yau Club and had accumulated more than 87,000 responses as at September 2009. Adaptation rights to use the Inventory were obtained from Hok Yau Club and OUHK.

The APPA (**Appendix 4**) is enabled to generate two results upon the completion of all 112 questions in the test:

1. A personality analysis based on the nine attributes. These results will come with a set of benchmarks (the average mark of the previous accumulated responses) for students' comparison; and
2. A ranked list of suggested programmes for students' consideration. These programmes are generated through a matching system which match one's characteristics with the attributes required for a programme.

Pilot tests were conducted on the APPA on two occasions to collect feedback on the APPA generated outcomes. Minor modifications were made subsequently.

The final bilingual version of the APPA was prepared and uploaded onto the website. Public access has been available since June 2010.

Stage 2 (2010 – 2011)

Case Studies of Outstanding Graduates

Another objective of the project was to conduct case studies of outstanding graduates in different disciplines to understand and analyze their keys to success in their study and career after graduating from local self-financing post-secondary programmes. These will serve as references for prospective graduates and senior secondary school leavers on preparations for further studies or first job seeking.

Invitation letters were sent to all institutions that offered self-financed sub-degree, degree or top-up degree programmes in Hong Kong asking for nominations of some students for interviews. In September 2010, we received a total of 40 nominations from 10 institutions, and we have selected 30 outstanding graduates as case studies (**Appendix 5**).

Individual interviews that each lasted for about 75 minutes were conducted between 13 September 2010 and 30 March 2011. The interviews were conducted in Cantonese and the process was audio-recorded. The audio record was then transcribed in writing. Interview summaries were prepared and edited by invited editors before these were translated into English. The process of having the 30 cases accomplished into published format took considerable manpower resources and time.

Stage 3 (2011-2012)

Publication of the Career Guidance Handbook

A Handbook entitled "Map out Your Future: A career guidance kit for sub-degree graduates with stories of success" (劃出未來—副學位畢業生出路指導與成功經驗) was published in May/June 2012. As its name suggested, the main purpose was to provide references for students on planning their future.

The Handbook consists of two major parts. The first part — "A next-step guide for sub-degree graduates" — covers a wide range of topics including some guidelines to teach students how to conduct self-assessment, how to choose a subject that suits one's characteristics, some facts about the job market, job hunting skills, as well as advice on constructing life goals. Experts were invited to give advice in drafting the contents of this part covering student counseling and job market overview, among other things.

The second part presents the success stories of 30 outstanding graduates. It was hoped that their experiences could provide some references for others to follow.

Two-way translation (Chinese-English and English-Chinese) on the full text was completed by April 2012, involving the hard work by professional freelance translators and editors.

Final proofreading and editing was performed by an external editorial team. The job was completed by mid May 2012.

The Handbook was delivered by the end of May 2012 and copies were sent to all self-financing institutions, secondary schools, and public libraries for circulation and reference.

Please refer to **Appendix 6** for the detailed *Table of Contents* of the Handbook.

Formal launch of the Project Website

The website was formally launched with comprehensive information including the printed information of the Handbook. The APPA was enhanced and formed part of the website (<http://appahk.hkuspace.hku.hk/>) entitled "Making a Choice" (選科志願評估). **Appendix 7** shows the sitemap of the website.

The website contains the project outcomes including (i) Background information of the project; (ii) APPA - The online personality assessment test; (iii) The e-version of the Career Guidance Handbook; (iv) The 30 success stories of outstanding graduates; (v) Information for further studies; and (vi) Information related to job seeking.

Final Workshop

To share the project outcomes with the public, a workshop was organized within the project end period. "Map out your Future" was the main theme, with a formal book launch on the Career Guidance Handbook, and three outstanding graduates were invited to share with the participants their stories of success. A total of 72 participants (teachers, students, parents and counselors) attended the workshop.

Deputy Secretary for Education Ms. Michelle Li, Mr. Hok Yau Club President Ng Tak-kay and Project-in-charge Prof. Enoch C.M. Young were the officiating guests for the Workshop.

A "Book Giving Ceremony" was arranged, during which a few secondary schools' representatives were each presented with a complimentary copy of the Handbook.

Project Team members Dr. Weiyuan Zhang, Ms. May Lau and Dr. Pansy Lam gave respective presentations on the project synopsis, APPA guide and job seeking skills.

Please refer to **Appendix 8** for details of the Workshop.

Conclusion

The project was completed in stages as scheduled with all objectives fulfilled through the active participation and assistance from various parties. Five outcomes were achieved, namely (i) APPA; (ii) success stories of outstanding students; (iii) Handbook; (iv) project website; and (v) providing a workshop for sharing the above outcomes.

These outcomes are free for public access. The major objective was achieved — assisting senior secondary school and sub-degree level students to prepare themselves to face the challenges ahead.

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