

Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme

Progress Report

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

Reporting Period: From November 2009 (month/year) to June 2010 (month/year)

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, University of Hong Kong

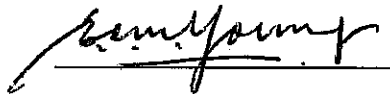
Project Period: From May 2009 (month/year) to May 2012 (month/year)

Part B

Please use separate A4-size sheets to report the progress with regard to the following aspects:

1. Types and brief descriptions of Project activities held/completed during the reporting period (*the information may be presented in the form of a table*).
2. The dates, time, venues and number of participants / beneficiaries of Project activities held, and resources (e.g. equipment, manpower) used for the implementation of Project activities.
3. Project milestone(s) and deliverables attained at the end of the reporting period and evidence showing the attainment of milestones and deliverables.
4. The percentage, in terms of key tasks, of the Project completed at the end of each reporting period.
5. Project variation*, if any, during the reporting period, together with details and justifications

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: 24 June 2010

* *A separate written application should be submitted to the Grant for prior written approval.*

* *Progress Report of Project should be signed by the head of the Grantee organization, the person-in-charge of the Project or the person who signed the Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme Agreement for acceptance of the Grant on behalf of the Grantee organization.*



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

2nd Progress Report

**The Project Team
School of Professional and Continuing Education
The University of Hong Kong**

June 2010

Contents

Project objectives	1
Change of Project Team Members	2
Activities recap – Programmes collection, classification, and ranking processes	3
Development of an online assessment instrument – Academic Programme Preference Assessment (APPA)	3
Match personal career attributes with requirements of programmes	3
Write instructions about how to use this test for programme choices	4
Translate the instrument and instructions from Chinese to English	4
Set up the online intelligent career psychological test instrument in English to Chinese	4
Test and finalize	5
Establish the project website	5
Career development and career preparation – Case studies on successful career experiences from outstanding graduates	6
Invite institutions to recommend outstanding graduates in different disciplines for case studies	6
Design the interview guide	6
Conclusions	6
Appendix 1: Sitemap of project website	
Appendix 2: Questionnaire for pilot test of APPA at Education and Careers Expo 2010	
Appendix 3: Major findings from questionnaire for pilot test of APPA at Education and Careers Expo 2010	

Project objectives

The overall objective of this project is to provide systematic career guidance 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 plan, 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.

The report covers activities during the reporting period (25 Nov 2009 – 23 Jun 2010) with the following headings:

1	Change of Project Team Members
2	Activities recap – Programme collection, classification and ranking processes
3	Develop an online assessment instrument – Academic Programme Preference Assessment (APPA): <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Match personal career attributes with requirements of programmes- Write instructions about how to use this test for programme choices- Translate the instrument and instructions from Chinese to English- Set up the online intelligent career psychological test instrument in English and Chinese- Test and finalize- Establish the project website
4	Case studies on successful career experiences from outstanding graduates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Invite institutions to recommend outstanding graduates in different disciplines for case studies- Design the interview guide

Change of Project Team Members

According to the approved proposal and budget, three staff members would be specifically recruited to manage the activities of this project – one Research Associate, one Research Assistant, and one half-time Programmer.

With replacements of the Research Assistant and half-time Programmer due to resignations, the names of team members as at 23 June 2010 are as follows:

Member's name	Title and Organization
Professor Enoch Young (Person-in-charge of the project)	Special Adviser to Director, HKU SPACE; Chief Adviser, HKU SPACE Centre for Research in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
Dr. Weiyuan Zhang (Project Coordinator)	Head and Chief Researcher, HKU SPACE Centre for Research in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning; Deputy Head, HKU SPACE Centre for Cyber Learning
Mr. Tak-kay Ng	President, Hok Yau Club Principal, CUHK FAA Thomas Cheung Secondary School
Ms. Chrysa Keung (to be replaced)	Research Associate, HKU SPACE Centre for Research in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
Ms. Melody Cheung (new staff)	Research Assistant, HKU SPACE Centre for Research in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
Mr. Bonic Choi (new staff)	Half-time Programmer, HKU SPACE Centre for Research in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
Ms. Jeanne Lam	Associate Head, HKU SPACE Centre for Cyber Learning
Dr. Mandy Hoi	Programme Director, College of Humanities and Law, HKU SPACE
Dr. Pansy Lam	Senior Programme Director, College of Humanities and Law, HKU SPACE

The project managers who take responsibility for project administration and coordination remain unchanged:

Member's name	Title and Organization
Ms. Dorothy Cheung	Administrative Officer, HKU SPACE Centre for Research in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
Ms. May Lau	Research Coordinator, HKU SPACE Centre for Research in Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning

Project Team Meetings and Sub-Team Meetings were held periodically, in which members shared and updated each other on the project's progress. As of the reporting date, two Project Team Meetings and five Sub-Team Meetings had been held.

Activities Recap – Programmes collection, classification, and ranking processes

Programme matching process: During the previous six months of the reporting period (25 May 2009 to 24 November 2009), the major tasks were to establish an online psychological instrument called the Academic Programme Preference Assessment (APPA). APPA is designed to help students better understand their personal career interests and abilities and therefore be able to make wise programme choice(s) that match their personal attributes. To facilitate this, a database containing information of local sub-degree, degree, and top-up degree programmes had first to be created. In order to ensure that all the programmes included in our database are government-accredited, reference was made to the programme information on the Information Portal for Accredited Self-financing Post-secondary Programmes (iPass) website. This was the process of programme collection. Information concerning 572 programmes in 20 study areas was collected and a programme database was built up.

Classification process: Among the 572 programmes, some had similar programme names and curriculum. Therefore the similar ones were grouped together in the same subject category so that the ultimate total number of subjects was reduced to 239 only.

Ranking process: Assistance was sought from the principals of institutions that offer local sub-degree, degree, and top-up degree programmes, to nominate experienced programme leaders who were able to rank the required personality attributes of subject areas according to their expertise. The nominated programme leaders were then provided with a subject rating form and an instruction sheet. They were asked to give ratings, with a scale of 0 to 9, on nine attributes – Organizational, Mechanical, Scientific, Sociological, Mathematical, Literacy, Musical, Aesthetic, and Social Service.

Among the 239 subjects, 13 of them needed to be re-assessed due to the divergence of ratings given by different programme leaders. Moreover, nine of the 239 subjects had been retrieved for further review by project team members as the ratings were provided by less than two programme leaders. With the ratings, the required personality attributes for each subject were calculated. The ranking process was then completed. This database would be used to facilitate the matching process in the online psychological test (APPA).

Development of an online assessment instrument – Academic Programme Preference Assessment (APPA) (選科志願評估)

Match personal career attributes with requirements of programmes

In the APPA, following the respondents' submitted responses to all 112 questions, the system will automatically analyze their interests, abilities and personalities. The data is to undergo a "matching process". "Matching" means the system will search in the programme database for the programmes that match the personality attributes of the respondents. When the matching process is completed, a ranked list of suggested programmes for students' consideration for further studies will be generated.

Write instructions about how to use this test for programme choices

The APPA has incorporated a number of features that help students make good use of the results. In order to ensure the application presented in a user-friendly way, the website has been specifically designed to meet this end by including graphs and tables. In addition, step-by-step guiding instructions have been provided to show the respondents how to read and interpret the results. All designs and instructions were precisely written for easy reading and understanding.

Written notes and remarks have been prepared for the two result pages of the APPA. The first result displayed is the analysis of nine personality types shown in the form of two sets of bar charts — one represents the respondent's score on the nine personality types, while the other denotes the average scores (also known as "the norms"). The norms are extracted from the database of Hok Yau Club when the psychological test was made publicly accessible from their website in 2005. From 2005 to 2009, more than 72,000 responses (with users aged between 15 and 22) were archived in the database. The top three personality types are highlighted in different colours for respondents' easy reading.

In the page which shows the second result of the APPA, a list of suggested programmes generated by the "matching process" will be shown, in which the top five subjects are ranked in priority with the corresponding offering institutions displayed in table format. Written notes and remarks are shown to indicate the order of highest mark as the most recommended one, and so forth. Users can access further information by just a single click on programme name or on the institution name.

Translate the instrument and instructions from Chinese to English

The project website is bilingual. Both English and Chinese versions are equipped with the same contents, graphics and layouts. It is simple and easy to switch between English and Chinese websites by clicking on the icon **ENG** or **中文** located at the upper right hand corner of the webpage.

In order to ensure that the contexts on both Chinese and English webpage are identical and accurate, the texts were translated and edited by relevant project team members. The translated texts included the introduction, programme information, the APPA instrument, instructions, as well as captions of the graphics.

Set up the online intelligent career psychological test instrument in English and Chinese

Following the completion of the ranking and matching processes, and the written instructions and translated contexts, the online intelligent career psychological test (APPA) was completed, and the instrument was embedded in the website: <http://appahk.hkust.hku.hk>. An updated sitemap of the project website is shown in Appendix 1.

Since the main target surfers of the website and users of the APPA are youngsters, the website was so designed and embellished to be catching, attractive, and user-friendly. Cheerful colour tones were adopted, with animated graphics and catchy icons. The APPA logo was created and placed on the homepage to draw the reader's attention to have a try at doing the APPA test.

There are many value-added features in the APPA webpage. Three functional features were added on the two result pages to facilitate printing, downloading, and exporting the results into an EXCEL file. By clicking on the “Print”, “Download”, or “Export” icons, the respondents of the APPA test can file the results for future reference.

Test and finalize

Pilot studies of the APPA instrument were arranged with the purpose of ensuring that the application works well and accurate results are generated. During the reporting period, two pilot studies were conducted.

The first one was conducted at The Education and Careers Expo 2010 held from 4 to 7 February 2010 at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. The target group of this pilot test was senior secondary school students or visitors who visited HKU SPACE’s exhibition booths. Each respondent was asked to complete a one-page questionnaire which comprised eight open-ended questions (Appendix 2). The focus of this questionnaire was to collect feedback on the usage, design and operational flow of the APPA, which were valuable references for further improvement or enhancement.

The results from the first pilot test indicated that users found APPA a useful and helpful instrument to help them better understand their personalities and get the suggested programme lists that match their attributes. A brief report of the pilot test is shown in Appendix 3.

The second pilot test was conducted from 17 May 2010 to 6 June 2010. A total of six secondary schools were invited to participate in the school pilot study and 1,075 students from Form Four and Form Six students were invited to complete the test. Each school was assigned with a login name and password. Students can follow the instructions and access the APPA link at school or at home. A total of 478 students have participated into the APPA. Following the lapse of the pilot study period, individual brief summary of findings was generated for each participating school, showing the results of scores distributed among the nine personality types of the students. This data can serve as a point of reference for the school to support student academic guidance and career development.

Establish the project website

The APPA incorporates a number of features that help students make wise study choice(s). Another main feature in the project website is the programme search engine. Students can search for the relevant programmes by entering a keyword into the search box called “Programme search” (課程搜尋) located at the top of every webpage. Both Chinese and English keyword searches are facilitated. Apart from this quick search box, an “Advanced Search Engine” (進階) is also designed for searching by other aspects: programme name, institution name, study area, programme type, and the duration of study. This provides a convenient way for students to access comprehensive information of accredited sub-degree, degree, and top-up degree programmes in the self-financing post-secondary sector in Hong Kong.

Career development and career preparation – Case studies on successful career experiences from outstanding graduates

Invite institutions to recommend outstanding graduates in different disciplines for case studies

Another objective of the project is 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. The purpose of drawing case studies is to provide experience sharing for potential students/graduates who are planning for their education or career paths.

About 30 outstanding graduates, nominated by institutions that offer local sub-degree, degree, and top-up degree programmes, will be invited for individual semi-structured interviews. They will be selected based on various criteria in the academic or career pathways. During the interviews, their accomplishment and valuable experience in gaining a job, the preparation for it, as well as their aspirations would be recorded and summarized as articles. It is targeted that the interviews would be started to conduct in September this year.

Design the interview guide

The case study is tentatively scheduled to be conducted throughout the second year of the project span. At the completion of this task, a summary of case studies would be uploaded onto the project website in both English and Chinese versions for reference of interested parties.

Meanwhile, the project team is working on the interview guide and questions setting, which would be sent to local and international scholars for validation. It is expected that the interview guide and questions will be finalized in July. Pilot studies would be conducted in late July or early August before the main case study.

Conclusions

The project has been going very well — as planned.

Milestones Completed (25 Nov 2009 – 24 June 2010)	Percentage of completion
Match personal career attributes with requirements of programmes	100% completed
Write instructions about how to use this test for programme choices	100% completed
Translate the instrument and instructions from Chinese to English	100% completed
Set up the online intelligent career psychological test instrument in English and Chinese	100% completed
Testing and finalizing	100% completed

Invite institutions to recommend outstanding graduates in different disciplines for case studies	20% completed
Design the interview guide	50% completed

Approximately 35% of the overall project has been completed successfully as planned.