

# Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme

**Progress Report**

**Project No. :**  
**13/QEGS/A-08-09**

Reporting Period: From October 2009 to March 2010

## Part A

Project Title: The Development and Implementation of Outcome-based Learning & Teaching in Full-time Face-to-face Degree Programmes

Name of Grantee: The Open University of Hong Kong


Project Period: From April 2009 to September 2010

## 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: John LEONG Chi Yan

Name of Grantee The Open University of Hong  
Organization: Kong

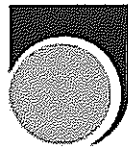
Position of Authorized

Person: President

Date: 77 APR 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.



香港公開大學  
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY  
OF HONG KONG

政府創辦 • 財政獨立 Government established • Financially independent

**The development and implementation of outcome-based learning and  
teaching in full-time face-to-face degree programmes**

**Progress Report 2 to the Education Bureau**

**The Project Team  
Open University of Hong Kong**

**April 2010**

## **Overview**

This report includes a description of the achievements in phase 2 and part of phase 3 of the project and, in separate sections, all the 'deliverables' for phase 2.

### **Part 1**

This part describes the project developments in the period October 2009 to March 2010.

### **Part 2**

This part contains the following four Programme Documents, one from each School, which had to be produced by the end of phase 2, viz.

- Bachelor of Social Sciences with Honours [School of Arts and Social Sciences]
- Bachelor of Business Administration with Honours in Management [Lee Shau Kee School of Business and Administration]
- Bachelor of Education (Honours) (English Strand) and Bachelor of Language Studies (English) with Honours (double degree) [School of Education and Languages]
- Bachelor of Computing with Honours in Internet Technology [School of Science and Technology].

### **Part 3**

This part includes 24 Course Documents, six from each of the above programmes, which again had to be completed by the end of phase 2.

**Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Redeveloping existing documents</b>	<b>1</b>
Sample documents	1
Staff and document development	3
The redeveloped documents and further revisions	4
<b>Seminar for all Schools</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Preparing academics for implementing a sample of courses</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Evaluation of course implementation</b>	<b>7</b>
Methodology	7
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>9</b>
Appendix 1: Schedule of meetings	9
Appendix 2: PowerPoints for the 19 February seminar	10
Appendix 3: Notes for the 19 February seminar	17
Appendix 4: Generic course-based outcomes	23
Appendix 5: Evaluation of the seminar	27
Appendix 6: An example of the questionnaires (for EDUE100F)	30
Appendix 7: Expenditure summary	33

## Introduction

The first report on the project on outcome-based education covered the work carried out up to the end of September 2009, viz.

- the development of a mechanism for assigning programmes to the Qualifications Framework;
- the development of generic programme-based and course-based learning outcomes; and
- running workshops for academics in each of the four Schools to assist them to redevelop existing programme documents (one per School) to meet the needs of outcome-based education.

In addition, the following programmes were nominated by the Schools for the project, viz.

**Table 1**

<b>School</b>	<b>Programme</b>
School of Arts and Social Sciences	Bachelor of Social Sciences with Honours
Lee Shau Kee School of Business and Administration	Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing <sup>1</sup>
School of Education and Languages	Bachelor of Education with Honours (English Strand) and Bachelor of Language Studies (English) with Honours (double degree)
School of Science and Technology	Bachelor of Computing with Honours in Internet Technology

Also, for the above programmes, each School selected six courses for the production of Course Documents and identified one course for more in-depth study of the implementation of outcome-based learning and teaching in the January 2010 semester.

This report covers the period October 2009 to March 2010, i.e. the latter part of Phase 2 ('Document Development and Staff Development') and part of Phase 3 ('Implementation Plan').

## Redeveloping existing documents

### **Sample documents**

As noted in the October 2009 report, the Project Team first worked with the School of Education and Languages on the redevelopment of:

- a Programme Document for the Bachelor of Education with Honours (English Strand) and Bachelor of Language Studies (English) with Honours (double degree); and
- a Course Document for one course, EDUE100F *Learning and Teaching in a School Context*, in the above programme.

The ways in which the Project Team helped the Programme Leader and Course Coordinator are explained later in discussing the other programmes/courses in the project.

<sup>1</sup> The Lee Shau Kee School of Business and Administration later decided to develop a Programme Document for the whole Bachelor of Business Administration with Honours in Management programme, but the Course Documents in its appendix relate to the Marketing concentration.

When they were completed, these documents were provided to members of the other three Programme Teams as samples to help them develop their Programme and Course Documents.

The courses chosen for the project were:

**Table 2**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Course code/title</b>
Bachelor of Social Sciences with Honours	<p><b>Foundation level</b></p> <p>ECONA121F <i>Foundation of Social Sciences: Economics</i></p> <p>POLSA122F <i>Foundation of Social Sciences: Political Science</i></p> <p><b>Middle level</b></p> <p>PUADA222F <i>Introduction to Public Administration</i></p> <p>SOCIA222F <i>Understanding Hong Kong Society</i></p> <p><b>Higher level</b></p> <p>PSYCA321F <i>Social Psychology</i></p> <p>SOSCA327F <i>Qualitative Social Research Methods 1</i></p>
Bachelor of Business Administration with Honours in Management	<p><b>Foundation level</b></p> <p>BUSB104F <i>Business Communication II</i></p> <p>BUSB171F <i>Business Statistics</i></p> <p><b>Middle level</b></p> <p>MGTB240F <i>Principles and Practices of Management</i></p> <p>MKTB250F <i>Introduction to Marketing</i></p> <p><b>Higher level</b></p> <p>MKTB362F <i>Marketing Research</i></p> <p>MKTB365F <i>Services Marketing</i></p>
Bachelor of Education with Honours (English Strand) and Bachelor of Language Studies (English) with Honours (double degree)	<p><b>Foundation level</b></p> <p>EDUE100F <i>Learning and Teaching in a School Context</i></p> <p>ENGLE102F <i>Effective Use of English II</i></p> <p><b>Middle level</b></p> <p>ENGLE200F <i>English for Effective Communication II: Reading and Writing</i></p> <p>EDUE252F <i>Educational Psychology</i></p> <p><b>Higher level</b></p> <p>EDUE365F <i>Teaching English in Schools</i></p> <p>ENGLE366F <i>Drama as a Communicative Art</i></p>

Bachelor of Computing with Honours in Internet Technology	<p><b>Foundation level</b></p> <p>ITS103F <i>Introduction to Information and Communications Technology II</i></p> <p>ITS123F <i>Introduction to the Internet</i></p> <p><b>Middle level</b></p> <p>COMPS201F <i>Computing Fundamentals with Java</i></p> <p>ITS234F <i>Web Site Design</i></p> <p><b>Higher level</b></p> <p>COMPS356F <i>Software Engineering and Project Management</i></p> <p>COMPS411F <i>Advanced Topics in Computing: Digital Multimedia and Java Mobile Games</i></p>
--	--

### **Staff and document development**

For more detailed consideration of the documents, further sessions were held with all the academics involved. In each case, the Project Team identified the main ways in which documents developed in line with outcome-based education differed from the existing ones and responded to queries raised about this approach.

- **Programme Teams**

In late October 2009, the Project Team met again with each of the relevant Programme Teams to discuss in greater depth the key features of Programme and Course Documents, using those developed with the School of Education and Languages as illustrative examples. (The timings of these and later meetings can be found in Appendix 1.)

It was suggested that those who had not participated in the earlier workshops or seminars should review the related PowerPoints and handouts on the outcome-based education website in the OUHK Online Learning Environment.

The issues highlighted, and exemplified, by the Project Team in each case were:

#### ***Programme Documents***

- the need for programme outcomes to be related to the OUHK institutional outcomes;
- the ways in which programme outcomes can be formulated to identify clearly the knowledge, skills and attitudes students are expected to demonstrate after completing a programme;
- the need to consider the most appropriate teaching/learning approaches and assessment strategies for helping students to achieve the learning outcomes, and to explain clearly in the Programme Document how all these aspects are aligned;
- the requirement to justify the level of the programme in terms of the Qualifications Framework and how this can be done;
- the inclusion of the outcomes for all courses in the course outlines in the appendices to the documents.

### ***Course Documents***

- how to examine whether the course outcomes contribute to the programme outcomes, and action to be taken where necessary;
- how to express learning outcomes in operational terms;
- the need for variation in the demands of course outcomes for courses at different levels;
- how the teaching/learning activities can be aligned with the teaching content and achievement of the learning outcomes; and
- the need for the assessment items to reflect the course outcomes and assess the extent to which students have achieved them.

The queries raised in discussion by the Programme Team members were similar across the Schools, focusing primarily on the appropriateness of certain action verbs for expressing programme/course outcomes and the number of outcomes to be included in each type of document. In response to the latter point, it was stressed that there is no fixed number, but that the programme and course outcomes should be aligned and be limited to outcomes which are clearly achievable through the teaching and assessment of the courses. There was also some concern expressed, particularly in one team, about possible difficulties in relating the programme outcomes to all the institutional outcomes.

While the responsibility for redeveloping the Programme and Course Documents lay with the Programme Leaders and Course Coordinators respectively, there was general recognition of the need for close cooperation among the Programme Team members so that institutional, programme and course outcomes are aligned.

Overall, while it was felt that these sessions laid a reasonably firm foundation for the work involved, it was considered necessary to have additional contacts/meetings with the Programme Leaders and Course Coordinators as they began to redevelop the documents.

- **Programme Leaders**

Contact was maintained with the Programme Leaders, primarily by email and phone, to discuss any difficulties they were facing in amending the Programme Documents. Possible solutions were suggested when required.

- **Course Coordinators**

In November 2009, the Project Team met with all the Course Coordinators of the selected courses on an individual basis to discuss further what was needed for their redeveloped Course Documents.

These meetings focused mainly on the same sorts of issues as were raised in the Programme Team meetings noted above, but they were related more closely to examples from the courses under consideration. Also, encouragement was given to include in their in-class activities more opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes.

### **The redeveloped documents and further revisions**

The remaining 23 Course Documents were received from the relevant Course Coordinators during the latter part of November and December 2009. The Programme Documents took somewhat longer to complete, due mainly to the need to specify learning outcomes for all courses in the programmes.



In each case, the Project Team examined the documents to see if any further guidance was required on possible revisions and, where this was the case, it continued to work with the staff concerned.

### **Programme Documents**

The redeveloped Programme Documents went through several drafts, in some cases involving frequent contacts with the Programme Leaders, normally by email. Although the type and extent of possible amendments raised by the Project Team varied, they were mainly related to suggesting ways of:

- aligning some programme outcomes more clearly with the institutional outcomes;
- relating some of the course outcomes more systematically to the programme outcomes;
- amending any inappropriate action verbs for both the programme and course outcomes; (see 'Course Documents' below for further details on this issue); and
- ensuring that adequate information was included on teaching and learning, and assessment.

After discussion, consensus on appropriate changes was reached in most cases.

The final versions of the four Programme Documents are in Part 2 of this report.

### **Course Documents**

Similarly, for the redeveloped Course Documents, further contacts (face-to-face, or by email and/or telephone) were made with the relevant Course Coordinators, in some cases several times, to discuss possible changes.

After discussion, the main areas in which revisions were suggested to certain documents were:

- the alignment of some of the course outcomes with the programme outcomes
- the statements of learning outcomes
  - While acceptable action verbs were used in most documents, certain wordings gave no clear indication of what students would be able *to do* and how this would be assessed. Examples included the use of 'understand' / 'comprehend', 'appreciate', 'be informed about', 'enable', 'learn', 'articulate' and 'highlight', and alternative wordings were proposed and discussed.
  - For a few courses, the cognitive demand did not seem to match the course level, e.g. a Higher-level course in which 'Describe' and 'Explain' were overemphasized and foundation courses with a heavier than justified focus on analysis and synthesis.
  - In several cases, the number of outcomes seemed excessive, making it difficult to ensure that they could all be assessed in a transparent way.
- teaching and learning strategies

Further details were sometimes required on the approaches used – particularly for group activities and presentations – and the purposes in adopting them.
- assessment

Again, more information on the nature of both continuous assessment and examinations was needed in some cases. Also, the relationship between assessment and the learning outcomes was not always clear, and further analysis sometimes resulted in a change in the outcomes and/or the assessment items.

As with the Programme Documents, the majority of the amendments proposed to certain Course Documents were accepted by the Course Coordinators after further discussion, the main exception being that for some courses the number of outcomes retained seemed greater than might be desirable.

## **Seminar for all Schools**

A seminar to report on progress in the project and introduce the new formats for future Programme and Course Documents<sup>2</sup> was held on 19 February 2010, with 75 academics attending. The Project Team shared with participants its experience in developing such documents, explained further the alignment of teaching/learning and assessment with the intended learning outcomes, and provided examples which had been produced during the project.

The PowerPoints and notes for this session are included as Appendix 2 and Appendices 3/4 respectively. In general, the feedback on the seminar was reasonably positive, as indicated in the evaluation report (see Appendix 5).

## **Preparing academics for implementing a sample of courses**

Four courses (one from each School) were selected for implementation using an outcome-based approach. The courses, all of which were offered in the January 2010 semester, were:

POLSA122F *Foundation of Social Sciences: Political Science*  
MKTB362F *Marketing Research*  
EDUE100F *Learning and Teaching in a School Context*  
ITS103F *Introduction to Information and Communications Technology II.*

The Course Coordinators concerned had all produced Course Documents for their courses previously (see Part 3) and so had developed some understanding of outcome-based education.

In December 2009, in preparation for teaching their courses, sessions were held with each of them, focusing mainly on the following areas:

- choosing teaching/learning approaches which seemed most likely to ensure that the learning outcomes would be achieved. In this regard, various approaches (e.g. lectures, group discussions, student presentations, debates and role play) were discussed, and their relative contributions to achieving the specific outcomes of their courses were considered.
- deciding on assessment strategies which align with the course learning outcomes and can assess the extent to which students have achieved them. Again, there was a review of a variety of possible methods (e.g. essays, multiple-choice items, short answers, case studies, experiments, problem-based learning, presentations, reflective diaries, portfolios and online discussion) and consideration of their appropriateness for the selected courses.

In these meetings, an effort was also made to allay any concerns about the procedures to be

---

<sup>2</sup> These terms have been used in this and the first report. However, as can be seen in the seminar PowerPoints, the University has decided to retain the original names – ‘Detailed Programme Proposals’ and ‘Course Proposals’ for such documents.

adopted for evaluating course implementation by stressing that: (a) the focus of the exercise would be on the students and the interaction among them and with the lecturer/tutor – and so should not be viewed as primarily an assessment of staff performance; (b) any advice given

should not be seen as an intrusion on staff autonomy in deciding on the most appropriate teaching/learning and assessment methods.

## **Evaluation of course implementation**

**(Phase 3: first part, covering 1 January to 31 March)**

The aims of the evaluation process are to make a general assessment of the extent to which teaching and learning are organized in line with the intended course learning outcomes and how far students appear to be achieving these outcomes; and to explore the views of teaching staff on the implementation.

### ***Methodology***

The evaluation of the courses implemented uses a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach. Data will be collected through various means. The Project Team will observe some classes (lectures/tutorials/laboratory sessions) to find out about the teaching/learning processes; a questionnaire will be administered to all students and interviews held with a sample of them; and the teaching staff will also be interviewed. In addition, the continuous assessment items for each course will be examined to see how they relate to the course outcomes.

### **Observation**

It was decided to observe two lectures/tutorials in each course, and these took place during March 2010 at the times indicated in Appendix 1. These sessions, which varied widely in nature, were concerned with:

- POLSA122F *Foundation of Social Sciences: Political Science (language medium: English)*
  - Tutorial: Student presentations and discussion on the topic ‘Economic development is a prerequisite for democratization’
  - Tutorial: Student presentations and a class debate on the topic ‘The executive-led system is a prerequisite for effective governance’
- MKTB362F *Marketing Research (language medium: Cantonese)*
  - Tutorial: Teaching the importance of marketing research for a company, based on a case study
  - Tutorial: preparation for using SPSS in an assignment
- EDUE100F *Learning and Teaching in a School Context (language medium: English)*
  - Student presentations on ‘Why I want to become a teacher’
  - Interactive lecture on views of teaching/learning and preparation for the school attachment
- ITS103F *Introduction to Information and Communications Technology II (language medium: Cantonese, with some English)*
  - Laboratory session: JavaScript – calculating compound interest
  - Laboratory session: JavaScript – a simple slot machine

At each of these observed classes, full field-notes were taken by at least two members of the Project Team; and these were subsequently compared and composite scripts are being compiled.

### **Questionnaires**

The students will be asked to complete a questionnaire at lectures held near the end of their courses. In each case, the questionnaire includes Likert-scale items about the value of having a list of learning outcomes; the extent to which students feel they have achieved each of the outcomes; the most valuable features of the course; and how far the continuous assessment helped them to judge their progress in achieving the outcomes. There is also an open-ended question about possible additional course elements for improvement and a 'further comments' section. (Appendix 5 includes the EDUE100F questionnaire, and the same format will be used for the other three courses.)

### **Interviews**

A random sample of about 10 students per course will be selected for interview – the primary purpose of which will be to explore in more depth the issues raised in the questionnaire. It is recognized that there may be difficulty in getting students to agree to be interviewed at a time when they are completing their final course assignments and preparing for examinations, but the Project Team will spare no effort to ensure there is a reasonable number of interviewees.

Soon after the end of the courses, the relevant staff will be interviewed to (a) explore their views on the appropriateness of the teaching/learning activities and assessment for fulfilling the intended course outcomes; (b) discuss any possible changes for future presentations; and (c) find out their opinions on outcome-based education.

Overall, although this evaluation is relatively small-scale, it is hoped it will provide insights into the extent to which the teaching/learning approaches and assessment are helping students to achieve the course and programme outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

The project has progressed smoothly, with all the activities identified for phase 2 having been completed. In the process, a significant number of academics have been involved in producing Programme/Course Documents and/or attending the seminar on progress in the project to date. In this way, many academic staff have developed a fuller understanding of outcome-based education.

Instruments for the evaluation stage have all been developed and all class observations have been conducted. Full details of the evaluation will be included in the final report.

The expenditure summary is enclosed in Appendix 7 (p. 33) of this main part of the report.