

Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme

Final Evaluation Report
Project No. : 03/QEGS/2011
Part A

Project Title : Models on Sub-degree General Education Curriculum and Exemplary General Education Courses

Name of Grantee : Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE)

Project Period : From October 2011 (month/year) to December 2013 (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: Professor Peter YUEN

 Name of Grantee: Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE)
 Organization: _____

Position of Authorized

 Person: Chairman, FSTE

 Date: 30 APR 2014

Received on 19 May 2014



自資高等教育聯盟

Federation for Self-financing
Tertiary Education

Project Title:

**Models on Sub-degree General Education Curriculum
and Exemplary General Education Courses**

Funded by Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme (QEGS)

Final Evaluation Report

Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education

March 2014

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1. Project aims and objectives

With the introduction of the New Academic Structure in 2012, local universities have been working hard to review and reform their degree curricula. General Education (GE) was not emphasized in most three-year undergraduate degree programmes as that in new four-year degree programmes do, it invariably becomes an important component of all local universities. While the designs of GE in these universities may take shape in different forms, there are commonalities in the goals and learning outcomes of GE courses as well as attributes of their graduates.

Under the funding support by the Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme of the EDB, a project developing models on sub-degree GE curriculum and exemplary courses was launched in 2011 by Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE). It aimed to enhance the quality of development and delivery of sub-degree GE courses through sharing of expertise among universities and sub-degree institutions in conjunction with visiting Fulbright scholars from American universities. More importantly, by establishing a common sub-degree GE framework that is mutually recognised and adopted by sub-degree institutions, the credit transfer of GE courses between sub-degree programmes and degree programmes can be facilitated.

There are 4 major objectives of the project:

- ✓ Analyze GE curriculum of local degree and sub-degree programmes
- ✓ Enhance the quality of sub-degree GE courses
- ✓ Develop exemplary GE courses in order to foster a common GE framework
- ✓ Publish GE Guidebook

2. Attainment of objectives

2.1 Analyze GE curriculum of local degree and sub-degree programmes

Relevant information was collected through the following means:

- Searching the institutions' websites
- Conducting surveys on GE curriculum of local degree and sub-degree programmes
- Interviewing senior administrators of individual institutions

Information on GE curriculum of self-financing degree programmes and sub-degree programmes was collected and collated through questionnaires (**Annexes A & B**). In parallel, Presidents or Vice-chancellors of local universities were approached, by whom responsible staff for the development and monitoring of respective GE curricula were identified for face-to-face interviews.

Results showed that there exists a difference in the structure of GE programmes as well as the maturity of the GE programme development amongst them. As a consequence, there was a substantial range of variations in GE management and curriculum structure offered by publicly-funded and self-financing institutions, as well as degree and sub-degree sectors. To offer graduates chances to articulate smoothly from sub-degree to degree programmes, the establishment of a common framework for GE courses would be essential.

2.2 Enhance the quality of sub-degree GE courses

In collaboration with Hong Kong-America Centre (HKAC), seven Fulbright senior specialists, who are seasoned experts in the field of GE development from American higher education institutions, visited Hong Kong throughout the project period. They brought U.S. experience through seminars and workshops. With their expertises, practitioners of local sub-degree institutions were given chances to get together and learn from each other, with a view to supporting the establishment of a common framework for sub-degree GE courses. Details of the seminars and workshops held are as follows:

- Dr Linda Bowman, Immediate Past President of the Community College of Aurora, visited and held a seminar entitled “General Education and Student Success in the Sub-degree Sector” on 31 March 2012, around 70 participants from 14 sub-degree institutions engaged.
- Dr Jerry Gaff, Senior Scholar of the Association of American Colleges and Universities visited and conducted a workshop entitled “Development Session on General Education” on 5 June 2012 which attracted 20 GE teaching and administrative staff.
- Dr Dennis Berg & Dr Robert Lagueux, two Fulbright Scholars in the field of GE development from American higher education institutions, shared their experiences in a seminar entitled “Achieving Learning Outcomes – Hints for Frontline Teaching Staff” on 26 January 2013 with the participation of 80 frontline teaching staff.
- Dr Paul Hanstedt, Professor of English at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, visited and shared good practices in “Designing and Implementing General Education Courses” with about 30 participants on 3 June 2013.
- Dr Hedley Freake, Past Chairman of the University of Connecticut’s General Education Oversight Committee, was extensively involved in faculty governance of the GE curriculum. During his visit, a seminar regarding “Program Articulation between 2-Year and 4-Year Institutions in Hong Kong: What can be learned from the US experience?” was arranged on 7 June 2013 which attracted about 20 teaching staff.
- Dr Norman Jones, Director of General Education and Curricular Integration at Utah State University, and Chair of the Utah Regents’ Task Force on General Education, conducted two seminars and book launch ceremony, namely “High Impact Teaching Practices in General Education” on 13 September 2013 and “Creating the General Education Narrative: How Does a Student Make Sense of the Curriculum?” cum Launch of General Education Guidebook on 25 September 2013 respectively with participation of about 100 teaching and administrative staff in total.

2.3 Develop exemplary GE courses in order to foster a common GE framework

As part of the project, FSTE members were requested to contribute a few model GE courses which were categorized into five major areas:

- Chinese language
- English language
- Arts and humanities
- Social sciences
- Sciences (including IT)

To facilitate data collection, the Working Group designed a course review form (**Annex C**) detailing course title, number of credits, course duration, contact hours; course description, aims and objectives; course intended learning outcomes; teaching and learning activities; types and weightings of assessments; syllabus topics and time allocation; text and reference materials. FSTE members either filled out the form or provided the information on their own format. The collected GE courses were sent to local subject experts, and Fulbright scholars, for their comments. With the highlights and advice from these experts, it is hoped that these samples can serve as role models and the quality of GE education among sub-degree institutions could be enhanced.

For exemplary courses information, please visit <http://www.fste.edu.hk/qegs3>

2.4 Publish GE Guidebook

With the publication of GE Guidebook, sub-degree institutions can make reference to the findings of the surveys, guidelines on curriculum design, best practices of delivery, and a pool of exemplary courses when developing their GE curriculum. It is hoped that in future a common framework can be established to ensure the quality and to guide the development of credit-bearing sub-degree GE courses, thus universities will be able to derive a more efficient and transparent admission system for sub-degree graduates into senior year places of degree programmes.

3. Project Impact

➤ Contributions to the sub-degree institutions

Courses developers of Sub-degree institutions can make reference to the Guidebook and exemplary GE courses to design their own GE curriculum. It is hoped that the degree sector and sub-degree sector can be brought closer through continuous communication and, in future, the development of a common GE framework and the establishment of an efficient and effective Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS).

➤ Contributions to GE teachers

The project brought GE teachers together to share views and experiences in designing and delivering GE courses through workshops and seminars. Those teachers were supported by Fulbright Scholars who possessed valuable experiences in their home institutions in the US as well as in local universities where they had worked closely to develop new GE curricula. The GE curriculum guidelines and exemplary GE courses advised by Fulbright Scholars would, to some extent, benefit GE teachers in curriculum design and delivery.

➤ Contributions to sub-degree students

In addition to major disciplines of study, sub-degree students are expected to achieve learning outcomes of GE courses: becoming an active inquiring learner with good communication and analytical skills; capable of appreciating socio-political, cultural and economic issues in the local, national, regional and international contexts with global as well as multidisciplinary perspectives. As a consequence, they are well prepared both for further studies in universities and career development in the workplaces.

➤ Contributions to universities

This project provided universities with solid information to draw up efficient and effective admission and exemption policies to admit sub-degree graduates who are well prepared to meet the GE requirements of the universities.

4. Cost-effectiveness

The total amount granted in this project was \$1,988,000. While most of the expenses were allocated for manpower and event arrangements, the project team was able to achieve the proposed objectives and deliverables in each milestone as planned. Figures from the aforementioned events showed that direct beneficiary, including GE teaching and administration staff, from this project was over 300, while students in the institutions will benefit from strengthened pedagogy and shared good practices. Table 1 summarizes the expenditure of the project. A detailed breakdown of the expenditure for budgeted items is provided in a separate Audit Report.

Table 1 Actual Expenditure against Approved Budget

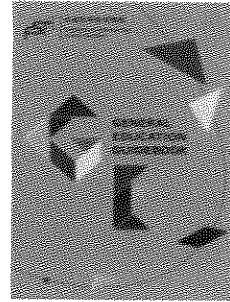
Budget Items <i>(Based on Project Budget of Agreement)</i>	Approved Budget	Actual Expense	Balance
Manpower	\$1,444,000	\$976,657.45	\$467,342.55
Equipment	\$20,000	\$11,131.33	\$8,868.67
Services	\$300,000	\$193,387.71	\$106,612.29
General Expenses	\$39,000	\$35,253.92	\$3,746.08
Others	\$195,000	\$157,336.40	\$37,663.60
Total	\$1,998,000¹	1,373,766.81	624,233.19

¹ FSTE has received a total grant of \$1,798,200 from EDB. As discussed with and agreed by EDB, the final amount of \$199,800 was not distributed.

5. Deliverables and Modes of Dissemination

5.1 Release of GE Guidebook: The book in printed and electronic versions collects guidelines, good practices and sample curriculum for teachers' use.

GE Guidebook



Editorial Team Members:

- *Ms Wanda Lau*
Community College of City University
- *Dr Vicky Lee*
College of International Education,
Hong Kong Baptist University
- *Dr Simon Leung*
Hong Kong Community College,
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- *Dr Raymond Ng*
School of Continuing and Professional Studies,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Contents:

- Preface:
 - i. Dr Glenn Shive, Executive Director, Hong Kong-America Center
 - ii. Dr Linda Bowman, Fulbright Senior Specialist
 - iii. Dr Jerry Gaff, Senior Scholar, Association of American Colleges and Universities
- 8 chapters in 144 pages:
 - i. Introduction
 - ii. Some Definitions of General Education
 - iii. Requirements of Common Descriptors of General Education for Sub-degree Programmes

- iv. Survey of Degree and Sub-degree General Education Curricula
- v. Good Practices in General Education for Self-financing Sub-degree Programmes: Some General Principles and Lessons to be Learnt
- vi. A Common General Education Framework for Sub-degree Curriculum
- vii. Articulation and Transfer
- viii. The Way Forward

Dissemination

Guidebooks were distributed to sub-degree institutions (both FSTE members and non-FSTE members), libraries of 8 UGC-funded institutions, Hong Kong public libraries, youth services organizations, EDB resource centres, and other related parties.

5.2 Book Launch cum Seminar

Date: 25 September 2013 (Wednesday)

Time: 3:00pm – 5:30pm

Venue: SCOPE Lecture Theatre (SLT), Academic Exchange Building,
City University of Hong Kong

Opening Remarks:

- *Mr Simon Chan*
Assistant Secretary (Further Education), EDB
- *Professor Peter Yuen*
Chairman, Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education
- *Dr Glenn Shive*
Executive Director, Hong Kong-America Center

Book Launch Ceremony:

- Introduction of project
- Demonstration of project website
- Acknowledgement (Book presentation to representatives of UGC institutions)

Seminar:

“Creating the General Education Narrative: How Does a Student Make Sense of the Curriculum?” by *Dr Norman Jones*, Fulbright Senior Specialist

Panel Discussion:

“General Education Articulation and Transfer”

- *Professor A. Reza Hoshmand*
Director of General Education, Hong Kong Baptist University
- *Professor Laurance Splitter*
Director, General Education Office, The Hong Kong Institute of Education
- *Dr Norman Jones*
Fulbright Senior Specialist
- *Dr Glenn Shive* (Facilitator)
Executive Director, Hong Kong-America Center

Gallery:



For more information, please visit <http://www.fste.edu.hk/qegs3>

5.3 Seminar on GE exemption and transfer

To endeavour and optimize the goal of the project, a seminar on “General Education Exemption and Transfer: Challenges and Opportunities for Tertiary Institutions in Hong Kong” was organized on 27 November 2013 upon positive feedbacks received from the book launch. Eventually, the seminar attracted over 50 participants from both degree and sub-degree sectors. Representatives of local universities were invited to share and explain current practices and mechanisms in granting exemption of GE courses to senior-year intake students. Furthermore, they looked into the long term arrangements for CATS on GE in the form of a roundtable discussion.

Panel Members include:

- *Professor King L Chow*, Academic Director (Undergraduate Core Education)
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
- *Professor Leung Mei Yee*, Director, University General Education
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- *Professor Laurance J Splitter*, Director, General Education Office
The Hong Kong Institute of Education
- *Ms Linda Chan*, SEO, Office of Undergraduate Studies
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- *Mr Gwyn Edwards*, Director of Common Core Curriculum
The University of Hong Kong
- *Dr Vicky Lee*, Associate Head
College of International Education, Hong Kong Baptist University
- *Dr Hung Kwok-wah*, Deputy Director
Hong Kong Community College, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

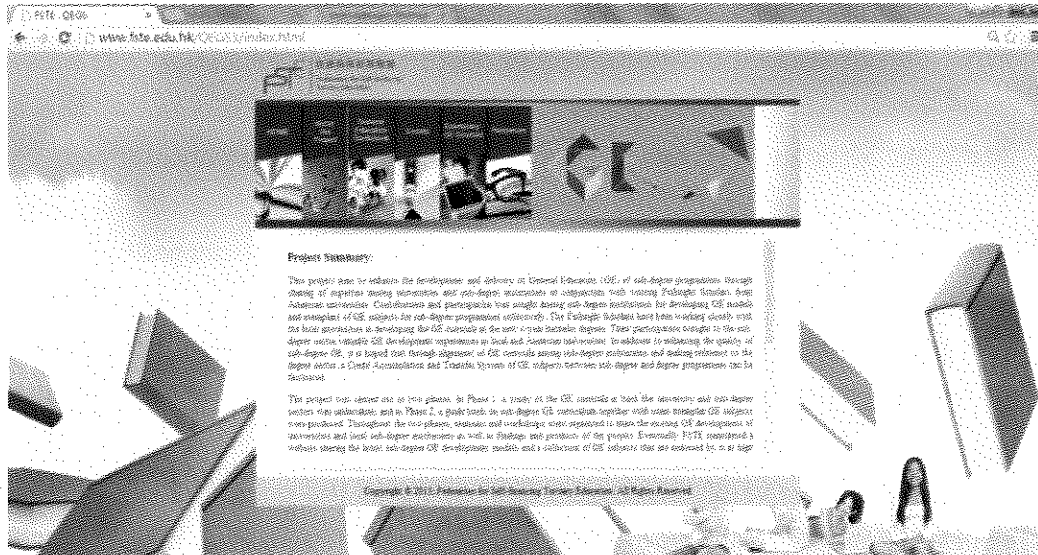
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For more information, please visit <http://www.fste.edu.hk/qegs3>

5.4 Establishment of a website for GE curriculum information

A project website was produced and attached to FSTE's website.



The website was set up to depict details and key milestones of this project. Particularly, there are exemplary GE courses and Guidebook uploaded in PDF and flipbook formats. Moreover, materials presented in the aforesaid seminars and workshops were uploaded onto the website for open access. (Please visit <http://www.fste.edu.hk/qegs3> for contents of project website)

6. Conclusion and its way forward

Over the past decade, the participation rate in post-secondary education was increased from 33% to 60% (UGC Higher Education Review, 2010). The expansion of student base engaged in post-secondary education was indeed a good impact to the development and growth of society. Under the New Academic Structure, GE has proven its distinctiveness and importance. There are established arrangements for public-funded degree institutions to admit sub-degree graduates into the senior year undergraduate programmes, it is a great opportunity for the sub-degree sector to work together towards a common framework in developing GE curricula and GE courses for the benefit of the sub-degree sector as a whole.

The overall objective of this project is to enhance the quality of sub-degree GE education through sharing of expertise and good practices among universities and sub-degree institutions in conjunction with visiting Fulbright scholars from American universities. With a series of seminars and workshops held and the publication of the Guidebook, positive feedbacks were received among GE practitioners who, directly or indirectly contributed to the curriculum reform. By sharing and learning good practices, the GE curriculum was becoming mature and in return fostering and facilitating the common framework. This framework is fundamental, essential and beneficial to sub-degree students' articulation in terms of recognition by different institutions.

FSTE, as the largest and most proactive coalition of self-financing post-secondary education providers, has taken initiatives in forming a Working Group on GE Curriculum to strive for a sector-wide alignment. It is believed prolonged funding by EDB could be sought to carry on the good work done by this project and eventually, through alignment of GE curricula among sub-degree institutions and making reference to those of local universities, recognition and exemption of GE courses between sub-degree and degree programmes can be facilitated. If there is a well established articulation system in Hong Kong, while there being direct competition from better established and mature systems (such as those in Europe and North America) and younger systems that are catching up rapidly (such as the system in Mainland China), the competitiveness of its education system could be maintained.