

Hong Kong Baptist University

Guidelines on the Implementation of the University Language Policy (ULP) 2017/18

Basic Principles

1. The medium of instruction for formal classroom teaching at HKBU is English, except for those courses that are granted exemption.
2. The University Language Policy (ULP) does not apply to courses NOT involving formal classroom teaching (e.g. Honours Project, practicum, laboratory and the like).
3. The language policy should adhere to the following general principles:
 - a) *While appreciating the benefits of mother-tongue education, for the sake of a good English learning environment, the Faculties/Schools/Academy of Visual Arts (AVA) are generally in support of the University's policy of using English as the "default" language of instruction.*
 - b) *It was understood that the use of English as the "default" language of instruction would not preclude the use of Chinese (Cantonese or Putonghua) in the teaching of materials, texts and courses related to Chinese language and culture, such as Chinese language and literature and journalism; Chinese philosophy and history; Chinese music; as well as Chinese medicine. These and other similar courses would be taught in Chinese¹.*
 - c) *Courses with a comparative or interdisciplinary element involving Chinese materials, text and culture would necessitate the use of Chinese as at least one of the languages of instruction².*
 - d) *For disciplines intended for training graduates to work in a Chinese language context, there would be a justification for some of the courses to be taught in Chinese³.*

¹ Chinese courses such as CHI and SCM belong to this category.

² Courses such as HMW, SOC and others belong to this category.

³ Courses such as SOWK, EDUC, CTV/AF and China Business-related belong to this category.

- e) *It would be up to the academic units to determine the Medium of Instruction (MOI) for individual courses when they work on the curriculum, and that the University would entrust the decision on MOI for courses to the respective academic units instead of setting a particular percentage threshold for the offering of courses with English-Medium of Instruction (EMI). In any case, with the understanding that **English** is the official MOI of the University, the academic units should observe that EMI courses should always be the majority except for foreign language courses which would be conducted as far as feasible in the appropriate languages⁴.*

- f) *While most VML courses in the General Education would be taught in Chinese for the sake of accessibility to students, at least five courses per semester would be offered in English.*

- g) *Mixed-mode of MOI is NOT allowed while the proposal for offering courses in more than one MOI section to provide different choices of MOI for students is welcome. The academic units should declare the dominant MOI for courses concerned.*

Collaborative arrangement

- 4. Since 2012/13 academic year, a regular exercise is to be conducted to collect from Faculties/Schools/AVA the annual submission of the Language Policy Implementation (LPI) Plans and the lists of courses with proposed Medium of Instruction (“MOI Plans”) to be offered in the academic year.

- 5. Faculties/Schools and AVA are responsible for implementing the language policy, and the QAC will oversee the overall implementation by scrutinizing the implementation plans and progress review submitted by the Faculty/School and AVA Boards (via the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee on Sub-degree Programmes (QASC) for sub-degree courses). The QAC will then submit an annual report to the Senate.

⁴ Foreign language courses including French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Italian offered by the Language Centre belong to this category.

Monitoring mechanism

6. The MOI of courses should be determined on the basis of academic merits in line with course pedagogical design rather than to hinge on the availability of faculty members. In this connection, it would be desirable to conduct the annual planning of the MOI of courses together with that of Teaching Assignment at the Faculty/Programme level to ensure the quality of teaching and learning in a holistic manner. As such, Faculties/Schools and AVA are requested to submit the MOI plans along with the Teaching Assignment plans in early **April** each year. The corresponding *LPI Plan* for 2017/18 should then be prepared by making reference to the *MOI plans*.
7. MOI of individual courses have been recorded on the academic transcripts since the 2013 intake for reference of the stakeholders in assessing the graduates for their career and academic pursuits.
8. In order to ensure that accurate information on the MOI could be included in the Calendar/Bulletin for advance reference of students prior to course registration, it was resolved that all applications for exemption from the ULP (the ULP stipulates English as MOI) should be submitted to the QAC for consideration and endorsement according to the annual submission schedule.
9. All non-English as MOI (non-EMI) applications will have to be duly endorsed by the respective Department Heads and Faculty/School Deans and the QASC (*for sub-degree courses only*). Applications subsequently endorsed by the QAC would be submitted to the Senate for final approval prior to the publication of the Calendar/Bulletin.
10. Normally, non-EMI applications not included in the annual submission will **NOT** be considered except for those cases under extenuating circumstances and/or with very strong justifications. Such applications, if any, will be considered by the QAC on a case-by-case basis.
11. Academic Units should take note of the following regarding the special arrangements on the offering of new courses under the respective circumstances:
 - a) For new courses to be introduced in the middle of the academic year (should

be minimal), applications for non-EMI courses should be submitted to the QAC via the respective Department Heads and Faculty/School Deans (also via the QASC for sub-degree courses) by **September** of the academic year such that approval of the Senate could be sought in time.

- b) For new courses to be offered under the new programme to be launched in the academic year, the Programme Director should submit applications for exemption from the ULP (for non-EMI courses if applicable) to the QAC via the Department Head and Faculty/School Dean (and also the QASC for sub-degree courses) along with the accreditation documents (i.e. Accreditation Report and Responses). The Accreditation Panel's approval to the introduction of the new programme should NOT be regarded as the University's official approval to the programme for delivering its courses in a language other than English. The QAC would deliberate on the exemption applications at the same time when the Accreditation Report and the written responses to the Report are being considered.

- c) At any rate, the Programme Director should note that the exemption, if approved, is not a one-off arrangement as such exceptional arrangement should be subject to regular review in future along with the annual review and submission of *LPI plans*.

Quality Assurance Committee
2 November 2016