**THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**

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| **Guidelines on sustaining Experiential Learning (EL) course quality** **under uncertain situations** |

**Background**

1. Under the ongoing pandemic, alternative arrangements were made for EL courses so that the experiential and service-learning components could still be facilitated without face-to-face interaction. To ensure that the quality of EL courses could be maintained under the alternative arrangements, GEO conducted data analysis based on the grade distributions, SET statistics and structural comments, as well as course lecturers’ self-evaluation reports to look for areas for improvement in online teaching/ activities in Semester 2, 2020/21. Based on the results, GEO has developed the following guidelines for enhancement of course quality in EL domain if pandemic/ uncertain situations persist in the upcoming semesters.
2. Flexibility will be exercised during pandemic/ uncertain situations. Course lecturers could adjust their plans on the items below according to the latest development of pandemic/ uncertain situations.

**Part I: Guidelines to facilitate better communications between course lecturers, students and stakeholders (i.e. partner organizations for CSLCs/ ELCs or BP schools for EL-on-BP)**

1. Communication between parties

Course lecturers are urged to:

**For CSLCs/ ELCs**

1. Provide the details of the contact persons from partner organizations to students as early as possible (i.e. before the commencement of/ during the services/ EL activities).
2. Utilize multiple online channels, such as social media groups, instant messaging groups, conduct online consultation sessions, etc., to contact students and partner organizations every week to:
* Ensure students understand assessment requirements, course arrangement updates, etc.
* Answer student enquiries on the design of services/ EL activities, formulation of proposals, revise activity designs, etc.
* Ensure partner organizations are informed of the latest updates of services/ EL activities.
1. Communicate and negotiate with partner organizations timely for any additional support that could be solicited from the organizations or any changes in nature of services/ EL activities (types, duration, number, schedule, etc.).
2. If possible, add the contact persons from partner organizations into the same student and course lecturer messaging groups before the commencement of/ during the services/ EL activities.
3. Ensure updates in class arrangements/ assessment requirements are consistent across different platforms.
4. Plan early on with partner organizations on the arrangements and logistics of services/ EL activities. Visit partner organizations in advance if possible.

**For EL-on-BP**

Course lecturers are urged to:

1. Attend the meeting conducted by GEO before the commencement/ during the semester. The aims of the meeting are to remind their roles (e.g. to provide support to BP students (student-teachers in BP schools) for the design of services/ EL activities and the formulation of proposals) and to consult EL Coordinator if they have enquiries on the EL-on-BP. If they cannot attend the meeting, they should read the materials prepared by GEO (i.e. PowerPoint) to understand more about EL-on-BP.
2. Disseminate the list of reminders to BP students (e.g. remind students to give the information letter about EL-on-BP to supporting teachers and negotiate directly with supporting teachers on practical arrangements) prepared by GEO before the commencement of EL-on-BP.
3. Contact BP school administration with SPFEO and arrange meeting(s) between BP schools (supporting teachers) and BP students before the commencement/ during the EL-on-BP, if necessary, to ensure BP schools understand their roles in the EL-on-BP and how they should support BP students.
4. Utilize multiple online channels, such as social media groups, instant messaging groups etc., to contact students and BP schools every week to:
* Ensure students understand assessment requirements, course arrangement updates, etc.
* Answer student enquiries on the design of services/ EL activities, formulation of proposals, revising activity designs, etc., in BP school contexts.
* Ensure BP schools and BP students are informed of the latest updates of services/ EL activities.

BP students are urged to:

1. Attend the meeting conducted by GEO before the commencement/ during the semester. The aims of the meeting are to remind their roles (e.g. to negotiate directly with supporting teachers on practical arrangements and consult course lecturers for the design of services/ EL activities and the formulation of proposals) and consult EL Coordinator if they have enquiries on the EL-on-BP. If they cannot attend the meeting, they should read the materials prepared by GEO (i.e. PowerPoint) to understand more about EL-on-BP.
2. Give the information letter about EL-on-BP to supporting teachers and negotiate directly with supporting teachers on practical arrangements before the commencement/ during the EL-on-BP.
3. Attend the meeting between BP schools (supporting teachers) and course lecturers before the commencement/ during the EL-on-BP, if necessary, to ensure BP schools understand their roles in the EL-on-BP and how they should support BP students.
4. Utilize multiple online channels, such as social media groups, instant messaging groups etc., to contact course lecturers and BP schools every week to:
* Consult course lecturers on the design of services/ EL activities, formulation of proposals, revise activity designs, etc. and ensure BP schools and course lecturers are informed of the latest updates on services/ EL activities.

BP schools (supporting teachers) are invited to:

1. Plan the practical arrangements of the services/ EL activities in their schools before the commencement of the EL-on-BP.
2. Negotiate directly with BP students on practical arrangements before the commencement/ during the EL-on-BP (for any adjustment needed).
3. Attend the meeting between BP students and course lecturers before the commencement/ during the EL-on-BP, if necessary, to understand their roles in the EL-on-BP and how they could support BP students.
4. Utilize multiple online channels, such as social media groups, instant messaging groups etc., to contact course lecturers and BP students every week to:
* Note the updates from BP students and course lecturers of the services/ EL activities to adjust the practical arrangements, if necessary. Inform BP students and course lecturers of the updated practical arrangements.
1. Below are the good example(s) on communication in Semester 2, 2020/21 for reference:

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| **Types** | **Course Code(s)/** **Course Title(s)** | **Good example(s)** |
| More frequent consultations and feedback  | CSL1006/ GEM1036 Developing Leadership through Service Learning  | * The course lecturer recruited more coaches from partner organizations to offer support and guidance to ensure the effectiveness of the service-learning experience. Additional consultation sessions were intentionally provided to scaffold students learning, manage their service-learning experience, develop analytical skills and create simulations for every activity.
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| GEL1001Exploring Hong Kong’s Rural Heritage and Nature | * Online consultation sessions were arranged to allow students to seek advice on their research plans and contingency measures in case they could not visit their chosen rural sites and conduct interviews with the locals.
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| Utilizing multiple social media for timely updates on course arrangement | CSL1027/ GEM1034 Enriching English-learning Environments in Hong Kong Schools | * Used WhatsApp to communicate with student teachers and supporting teachers in schools to monitor the process, understand the difficulties involved and provide solutions for improvement.
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| GEL1008 Organisation of Life Wide Learning Activities*(EL-on-BP course)* | * Used Zoom/ WhatsApp/ Signal for lecturer-student communications to solve various problems under the pandemic situation.
* Helped BP students deal with school administration.
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**Part II: Guidelines on flexible arrangements during the pandemic for EL courses**

1. Modes of lectures, tutorials, services/ EL activities

Course lecturers could:

1. Decide the class arrangements and mode of services/ EL activities in alignment with EL handbook guidelines and framework and in accordance with the University’s latest guidelines on classroom arrangement under the COVID-19 pandemic. The mode(s) of class arrangements and services/ EL activities would be submitted to CCCCUS for endorsement via GEO for Semesters 1 and 2.
2. Review the situation every week or two weeks and arrange face-to-face lectures and tutorials, if possible.
3. Liaise with partner organizations every week or two weeks to see if there are any opportunities for students to provide direct services/ EL activities. Any update(s) in lectures, tutorials, services/ EL activities arrangements should be communicated to students as soon as possible by email and/or multiple online channels.
4. Out of safety concerns for students, course lecturers, partner organizations and service targets, course lecturers may offer limited opportunities for face-to-face lectures, tutorials, services/ EL activities, bounded by the University’s policies. Course lecturers are free to amend the arrangements according to circumstances, whilst closely observing the University’s policies. If the situation does not allow face-to-face interactions, course lecturers could consider converting all lectures, tutorials, services/ EL activities to online mode.
5. Consent from students, service targets, and partner organizations (and/or BP schools for EL-on-BP) should be sought, as whichever parties are involved before arranging face-to-face lectures, tutorials, services/ EL activities under pandemic or uncertain situations.
6. Below are the good example(s) on flexible arrangements on lectures, tutorials, services/ EL activities in Semester 2, 2020/21 for reference:

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| **Types** | **Course Code(s)/** **Course Title(s)** | **Good example(s)** |
| Flexible arrangement in face-to-face or online mode of services/ EL activities | CSL1002/ GEM1025 Understanding Children Growth in Low Income Families | * Some students were allowed to conduct home-visits with consent from the parents of service targets.
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| CSL1005/ GEM1020 Enhancing Leadership by Organizing Mathematics Activities | * The original activities involved card games and pencil and paper games, which were difficult to handle on Zoom; thus, they were replaced by a Mathematics Magic performance.
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| CSL1016/ GEM1027 Understanding Hong Kong’s Environmental Performance through Practice | * Only the lectures, presentations, and consultation sessions were conducted online. The service session was still conducted face-to-face.
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| CSL1026/ GEM1011 Religions in Hong Kong: Experience and Reality | * Students were required to visit religious sites and observe religious ceremonies. Under the pandemic, students could still participate in those religious ceremonies through live streams with assistance from the relevant religious institutions.
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| CSL1034/ GEM1030 Transforming Children Through Reading Stories in EnglishCSL1037/ GEM1039 Drama as a Creative Teaching Strategy in the Language Classroom | * Students were allowed to conduct workshops, lessons, and activity sessions for the target students using online platforms.
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| GEL1001 Exploring Hong Kong’s Rural Heritage and Nature | * Students were allowed to conduct interviews and site observations using online platforms.
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| CSL1038/ GEM1001 Health Promotion Practice | * Some students completed a one-hour health promotion webinar workshop at a local school. Others completed their health promotion practice via face-to-face activities.
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| GEL1008 Organisation of Life Wide Learning Activities | * Students could design online activities for their service targets.
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| Adjustment of venues for services/ EL activities | CSL2044/ GEM2022 Promoting Digital Citizenship at Secondary Level | * The direct services were changed to be conducted online for the EdUHK library. The partner organizations were changed from two (EdUHK library and libraries in secondary schools) to one (EdUHK library) due to the pandemic, and the service targets (including librarians and students) were the same.
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| Flexibility in enactment of students’ action plan | GEL1003Love’s Work: Cultivating Relations with Care | * Allowed students to conduct intra-group meetings and individual’s own implementation of action plans via face-to-face contact/ social media.
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1. Postponement of services/ EL activities

Course lecturers could:

1. Allow students to postpone their services/ EL activities with flexibility so that they can implement them later in face-to-face mode when the social distancing measures are relaxed.
2. Permit students to opt for late submission of assignments with flexibility if they need to postpone their activity schedule.
3. Complete the postponed services/ EL activities in the immediate next semester, if possible.
4. Report cases of postponing the services/ EL activities till immediate next semester in the self-evaluation report(s) on the alternative arrangements for EL Courses under pandemic/ uncertain situations. The self-evaluation report(s) would be submitted to CCCCUS via GEO for endorsement/ comment.
5. Below are some example(s) of postponing service/ EL activities in Semester 2, 2020/21 for reference:

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| **Course Code(s)/** **Course Title(s)** | **Example(s)** |
| CSL1005/ GEM1020 Enhancing Leadership by Organizing Mathematics | * Students were allowed to extend their services for a few months as many partner organizations (i.e. the schools) did not organize online activities.
* Course lecturer needs to update GEO on students’ progress of service delivery by the end of the service postponement.
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| CSL1050/ GEM1015 Partnerships with Agencies in Community | * There was a 33-hour internship requirement as an assessment for the course. As the pandemic was widespread, face-to-face activities could be replaced by a certain percentage of online activities, or students could choose to opt for “late submission” until pandemic situation improved for them to resume face-to-face activities. For the group of Semester 2, 2020/21, two cases have been approved to complete all requirements not later than Semester 1, 2021/22.
* Course lecturer needs to update GEO on the progress of the two cases by Semester 1, 2021/22.
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1. Duration of service activities

Course lecturers should:

1. Review, if necessary, the arrangements of the services/ EL activities every week or two weeks, and liaise with partner organizations to provide a flexible timetable for service delivery. The minimum of 25 hours as direct service time (for CSLCs) or active experience (ELCs) must be kept. Course lecturers should provide justifications if the number of hours as direct service time or active experience were affected/ reduced in pandemic/ uncertain situations in the self-evaluation report(s) on the alternative arrangements for EL Courses under pandemic/ uncertain situations. The self-evaluation report(s) would be submitted to CCCCUS via GEO for endorsement/ comment.
2. Update students with any changes to EL arrangements as soon as possible by email and/or multiple online channels to avoid communication blocks.
3. Below is a good example on flexible timetable for service delivery in Semester 2, 2020/21 for reference:

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| **Course Code(s)/** **Course Title(s)** | **Good example(s)** |
| CSL1007/ GEM1035 In search of Narratives in Life | * The partner organization could not arrange the service time according to the class schedule due to the shortage of manpower and the unstable health situation of the elderly clients. Students were very committed to the class and were willing to accept a flexible timetable for the service delivery.
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1. Achievements on CILOs

Course lecturers should:

1. Adopt flexibility in the services/ EL activities with minimal changes to the CILOs.
2. Report the inability to achieve CILOs and the alternative arrangements in the self-evaluation report(s) on the alternative arrangements for EL Courses under pandemic/ uncertain situations. The self-evaluation report(s) would be submitted to CCCCUS via GEO for endorsement/ comment.
3. Below is a good example indicating flexibility in the services/ EL activities with minimal changes to the CILOs in Semester 2, 2020/21 for reference:

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| **Course Code(s)/** **Course Title(s)** | **Good example(s)** |
| CSL2044/ GEM2022 Promoting Digital Citizenship at Secondary Level | * One of the CILOs (CILO3: acquire skills, knowledge and experience in providing basic library and information services to secondary students in a school library setting) could not be achieved because students could not go to the secondary schools to offer direct services in the school library setting. To ensure the students had the experience of working in a library, students were arranged as the best alternative to offer services for different sections in the EdUHK Library. Students’ feedback collected via SET and online google survey was positive regarding the alternative arrangements.
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1. Assessment samples

Course lecturers should:

1. Develop the sample pool by accumulating samples of their students’ activity proposals, videos and materials when the courses are offered. Course lecturers will receive emails from GEO by August and December for new courses offered in Semesters 1 and 2 in each academic year to start developing the sample pool including, e.g. the samples of their students’ activity proposals, videos and materials accumulated in the previous semester(s) of course offer. It is anticipated that the sample pool will be enriched progressively when more students have taken the courses, and students can then have more samples and resources for reference.
2. Protect students’ privacy by removing personal details such as names, affiliated programmes and/or any visual images that may disclose the personal identity of the students.
3. Below is a good example of developing sample pool in Semester 2, 2020/21 for reference :

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| **Course Code(s)/** **Course Title(s)** | **Good Example(s)**  |
| GEL1001 Exploring Hong Kong’s Rural Heritage and Nature | * Exemplary documentaries and websites produced by students last year would be shared with course lecturers of future cohorts to reassure their students that their investigations might not be significantly affected even in similar situations as experienced by their senior counterparts.
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1. Strategies on improving SET results

GEO will continue to monitor the SET of EL courses offered in each academic year under pandemic/ uncertain situations and identify course(s) with low SET (below 3.0) and those structural comments which may directly affect the learning and teaching quality in long term (e.g. issues on communication between parties, class/ assessment arrangements, assessment samples etc.), and inform course lecturers concerned directly/ via respective HoDs to propose any strategies for enhancing the quality of courses by March/ April and July/ August for EL courses offered in Semesters 1 and 2 respectively. The strategies should reach GEO for review and comment by August and December for EL courses offered in Semesters 1 and 2, respectively. To close the feedback loop, GEO will follow up with the teaching and learning improvement strategies proposed by the course lecturers for EL courses.

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