

***Office of the Vice-President (Academic)
Memorandum***

To : All Staff and Students (*via e-announcement*)
From : Prof. Franklin T. Luk, Vice-President (Academic)
Ref. : VPA/1202/011
Date : 28 February 2012

Implementation of the University Language Policy

Recently, there have been discussions on campus regarding the language policy. This issue was deliberated again at the Senate meeting yesterday. I am writing in that connection to share with you the University's plan to take forward the implementation of the language policy as agreed to by the Senate.

2. Let me first begin by recapitulating the University language policy approved by the Senate in May 2003. The policy statement reads as follows: "*English is the medium of instruction for formal classroom teaching, with exception for Chinese-related courses*". To accommodate language courses and some other courses that may not be Chinese-related, the statement was elucidated by the Senate in June 2011 to read as "*The medium of instruction for formal classroom teaching at HKBU is English, except for those courses that are granted exemption*".

3. Under this 2003 policy, Faculties/Schools are required to adopt English as the "default" medium of instruction. The recent discussions at the Senate, Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), and Teaching and Learning Policy Committee (TLPCC) have re-affirmed the University's position to that effect.

4. It was recalled that when the language policy was instituted in 2003, the Senate and the then Course Accreditation and Review Committee (CARC) had approved the general principles pertaining to exceptions to the language policy, and these are extracted as follows:

"a. While appreciating the benefits of mother-tongue education, for the sake of a good English learning environment, the Faculties/Schools 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 and Putonghua) in the teaching of materials, texts and subjects 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 subjects would be taught in Chinese.
- c. Subjects 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 instruction. Subjects such as Humanities, Translation, CTV, Sociology and others belong to this category.
- d. For disciplines intended for training graduates to work in a Chinese language context, such as Social Work and Education Studies, there would be a justification for some of the subjects to be taught in Chinese.
- e. Language classes for French, German, Spanish and Japanese would be conducted as far as feasible in the appropriate language.
- f. While most RP subjects in the Complementary Studies group would be taught in Chinese for the sake of accessibility to students, at least five subjects per semester would be offered in English.”

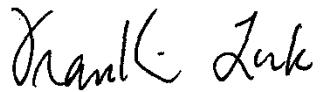
At that time, Faculties/Schools submitted their respective implementation plans as well as categories of courses that would require deviation and/or exemption. However, the implementation work had somehow come to a halt after the restructuring and combination of CARC and another committee to form the new committee of QAC in June 2006.

5. Referring to the Senate meeting yesterday, it was agreed that similar arrangement along the vein in 2003 be re-activated to monitor the implementation of the language policy on a longer term basis, resting on the full support and collaboration of our Faculties/Schools and AVA. It is envisaged that this collaborative arrangement would work well in that effectiveness would be assured if and when the responsibility and ownership for the implementation of the language policy are situated as closely as possible to the site of teaching and learning.

6. Under this arrangement, Faculties/Schools and AVA are responsible for implementing the 2003 language policy, and QAC will oversee the overall implementation by scrutinizing the implementation plans and annual progress reports submitted by the Faculty/School and AVA Boards. In addition, the Boards are requested to submit lists of courses pertaining to the use of medium of

instruction under both the 3-year and 4-year curricula (including GE courses), along with their rationale, justifications and/or questions from the teaching and learning point of view. QAC will scrutinize all these submissions from the Faculties/Schools and AVA and then submit an annual report to the Senate, along with its observations and recommendations, on the overall progress of implementation.

7. I hope this memo would serve to update colleagues and students on the issue of language policy and to solicit your support throughout the implementation process. Last but not least, I wish to emphasize that as teachers, we are duty-bound to help our students not only in the transmission of knowledge but also in their preparation for the world of work and the challenge of life-long learning. To further aid our students, we should inform them clearly during registration the medium of instruction for each class. Let's work together for the benefit of our students!



c.c. President & Vice-Chancellor
Vice-Presidents and Associate Vice-Presidents
Deans and Acting AVA Director