From the Executive Director

The past few months have been both busy and fulfilling for HKCAAVQ. With the third seminar on student engagement successfully carried out in May 2016, our anniversary celebrations have come to an end. I would like to thank all those who attended the events and in particular to those who attended our Open House which was a first event of this kind we organised to share our work with the local community.

While we continue to focus on our quality assurance work, a number of important projects have been initiated and are in good progress. A series of focus group meetings have been conducted as part of the Review of Accreditation Standards and Criteria. The outcome of these has been valuable to the review and we thank all attendees for their participation and comments. We look forward to the support and engagement from stakeholders in the upcoming consultations.

HKCAAVQ has set up two Liaison Panels for the two accreditation units comprising stakeholders including operators, specialists and professional bodies. The first Liaison Panel meetings were held in mid-year. Notes and agendas will be posted on our website for public access in October. This initiative is a follow up to a recommendation made in the INQAAHE External Review report of HKCAAVQ.

Coming up on 17 November 2016, HKCAAVQ and the Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE) will jointly organise a conference on “Enhancing the student learning experience” at PolyU Hung Hom Bay Campus. The conference aims to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders in the sector to report on their latest research, explore ideas, views and experience, and share their professional experience. We look forward to your participation.

Spotlight

HKCAAVQ builds partnership with the Australian Skills Quality Authority

HKCAAVQ and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration on quality and regulatory approaches with a particular focus on vocational and professional education and training. The MoU was signed by Ms Dorte Kristoffersen, Executive Director of HKCAAVQ and Mr Mark Paterson AO, Commissioner, Regulatory Operations of ASQA on 18 October 2016 in Melbourne, Australia. The signing of the MoU marks a new chapter in the development and work of HKCAAVQ after taking on responsibility for the vocational sector in 2007. ASQA is the national regulator for Australia’s vocational education and training (VET) sector, and the first wholly VET regulator/quality assurance agency with which HKCAAVQ enters into MoU. The MoU would enhance mutual understanding of quality assurance and regulation of VET provision in Australia and Hong Kong, and facilitate exchange of information. For details of the MoU Signing Ceremony, you could also refer to the press statement published by ASQA.

HKCAAVQ e-Portal launched

The HKCAAVQ e-Portal was officially launched on 4 July. This new electronic communication platform enables operators to apply for accreditation and assessment services online. Please click on the e-Portal icon on our website to learn more about the e-platform.

HKCAAVQ Corporate Video available

HKCAAVQ has prepared a short corporate video that introduces the roles and work of the agency. It is now available on “About HKCAAVQ” on the HKCAAVQ webpage.
Forums on Institutional Governance and Academic Leadership

HKCAAVQ has hosted two QESS forums on institutional governance and academic leadership in May and July 2016 respectively with an aim to promoting a quality culture and improving quality assurance practices in Hong Kong.

The forum titled “Leadership for Quality Learning: Enhancing Governance and Quality Assurance” was held on 13 May 2016 and delivered by Professor Kerry Kennedy in his former capacity as the Research Chair Professor of Curriculum Studies and Director of Centre for Governance and Citizenship at The Education University of Hong Kong. At the forum, Professor Kennedy shared with over 80 participants his views on the role of quality assurance in effective governance and management of institutions. He argued that collaborative/participatory governance could encourage institutions to review and improve their performance, leading to better decision-making processes and a productive learning culture. The forum was well received by participants including representatives from self-financing education institutions and professional bodies.

Another forum titled “Academic Leadership in a Dynamic Environment” was held on 8 July 2016. Professor Raymond So, in his former capacity as Professor of Finance and Dean of School of Business at Hang Seng Management College (HSMC), delivered a talk on how effective academic leadership could foster intellectual and institution excellence, and cope with incoming challenges in the local higher education sector. He shared his experience at HSMC and concluded that collegiality was the key to a successful academic leader. About 50 participants attended the event and they all highly commended the forum for the sharing of knowledge and practical experience that were valuable to the self-financing education institutions.

Joint Advisory Statement for Effective International Practice: Combatting Corruption and Enhancing Integrity by CHEA and IIEP-UNESCO

A joint report developed by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the International Institute for Educational Planning of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IIEP-UNESCO) titled Advisory Statement for Effective International Practice: Combatting Corruption and Enhancing Integrity: A Contemporary Challenge for the Quality and Credibility of Higher Education has been uploaded on the HKCAAVQ website. The report highlights the problems posed by academic corruption in higher education and suggests effective preventive actions that quality assurance bodies, governments and higher education institutions around the world can adopt to combat such problems in connection with admissions, examinations or awarding of degrees. The document can be viewed here.

3rd Anniversary Seminar on Student Engagement

As part of the HKCAAVQ 25th Anniversary Seminar series, the “HKCAAVQ Forum on Quality Assurance Practices: Trends and Models Improving Student Engagement” was held on 31 May 2016. With the support from the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme (QESS), HKCAAVQ invited Professor Hamish Coates, Chair of Higher Education at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne to deliver a keynote lecture on assessing and enhancing student engagement for the improvement of the quality of higher education, and to talk about the implications of student engagement for pedagogy and institutional policy. Professor Coates introduced new tools including belonging, connection, opportunity and discovery for measuring student engagement and concluded that support is important in increasing student engagement and better student support cultivates a good learning outcome.

Professor Coates’ presentation was followed by a panel discussion session joined by Dr Lawrence Chan, Deputy Executive Director of Vocational Training Council, Dr Tom Fong, Associate Vice-President of Hang Seng Management College and Professor Paul Kwok, Secretary to Council of The Open University of Hong Kong. During the panel discussion, the panelists shared their experiences in engaging students in different committees at institutional and departmental levels as well as through course evaluation surveys, etc. They also shared the challenges encountered when assessing and enhancing student engagement. The event facilitated a fruitful exchange of ideas and experience with over 120 participants.

After the forum, Professor Coates also conducted an internal workshop for HKCAAVQ staff on student engagement on 1 June 2016, which helped staff gain a deeper understanding on the topic in relation to their accreditation work. Case studies from other tertiary institutions were reviewed and discussed during the workshop.
Attachment Visits – HKCAAVQ and Council for Private Education (CPE) of Singapore

Riding on the Memorandum of Understanding between HKCAAVQ and CPE*, attachment visits were arranged for staff from both sides in June 2016.

Dr Kathy Chung, Registrar of Academic Accreditation and Assessment, was attached to the CPE’s Registration Department and Assessment Department (AD) from 13 to 17 June 2016. The attachment programme included briefings on CPE’s Enhanced Registration Framework (ERF) and EduTrust Certification Scheme (EduTrust), as well as site visits for ERF registration renewal of a private education institution (PEI) and the EduTrust renewal assessment of another PEI. In addition, arrangements were made for Kathy to observe both a pre-visit and a post-visit EduTrust assessment meetings where panel members discussed and assessed the PEIs concerned against the six criteria stipulated under the EduTrust certification process, using the checklists and templates developed for internal use. The attachment had provided operational understanding and insights into the CPE’s regulatory and quality assurance system and processes in the private education sector.

Ms Lim Su-Fern, Principal Inspector of Planning and Operations Department and Mr Benjamin Foo, Principal Assessor of AD visited HKCAAVQ from 22 to 24 June 2016. Colleagues of HKCAAVQ briefed the visitors on the work of HKCAAVQ, and the visitors had an opportunity to meet with various colleagues of HKCAAVQ in small groups so that they could learn more about HKCAAVQ’s accreditation and consultancy services, research and training, as well as assessments of non-local courses. The two visitors observed a session of a Refresher Workshop for Specialists. They also provided a presentation to HKCAAVQ staff on ‘Regulation and quality assurance of private education institutions (PEIs) in Singapore’, which was well received with an enthusiastic Q&A session.

The value of cooperation and mutual understanding was affirmed by both parties. HKCAAVQ looks forward to more collaborative opportunities with CPE.

* Effective 3 October 2016, the Council for Private Education became part of a new statutory board – SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and the SSG Board has appointed the Committee for Private Education (CPE) to carry out its functions and powers relating to private education under the Private Education Act.

HKCAAVQ Annual Dinner

HKCAAVQ organised its Annual Dinner 2016 at the Hong Kong Bankers’ Club on 21 September 2016. Over 100 guests joined our Council Members and staff to celebrate this great event of the year. At the dinner, Ir Dr Alex Chan, BBS, Chairman of HKCAAVQ delivered a welcome speech and took stock of past achievements. He also expressed gratitude to stakeholders for their continued support in helping HKCAAVQ develop a robust quality assurance mechanism. Mr Eddie Ng Hak-kim, SBS, JP, Secretary for Education, who was the Guest-of-Honour, also addressed the dinner and reiterated the HKCAAVQ’s key role in upholding the standards of education and training institutions and the quality of the qualifications they offer.

HKCAAVQ in Numbers

Summary Accreditation Reports
To enhance transparency about the outcomes of our accreditation processes, HKCAAVQ began publishing summary accreditation reports in 2013. Starting from January 2016, summary accreditation reports for Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) and Periodic Review (PR) are also published on the HKCAAVQ website.

As of October 2016, the web page of the summary accreditation reports has recorded over 14,709 page views. The following statistics provide a breakdown of the reports uploaded on the HKCAAVQ website as of 2 October 2016:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total Summary Accreditation Reports online:</td>
<td>512</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial Evaluation (IE):</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Programme Accreditation (LPA):</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Evaluation + Learning Programme Accreditation (IE + LPA):</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Programme Re-accreditiation (Re-LPA):</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Programme Accreditation + Learning Programme Re-accreditiation (LPA + Re-LPA):</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Evaluation + Learning Programme Accreditation + Learning Programme Re-accreditiation (IE + LPA + Re-LPA):</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Area Accreditation (PAA):</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic Review (PR):</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Area Accreditation + Periodic Review (PAA + PR):</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click [here](http://www.hkcaavq.org) to view Summary Accreditation Reports.

Qualifications Register
As of 14 October 2016, there are 7,853 qualifications on the Qualifications Register. Click [here](http://www.hkcaavq.org) to view detailed breakdown of the October statistics.

Note:
*LPA* and *Re-LPA* were previous known as “Programme Validation (PV)” and “Programme Revalidation (Re-PV)” before the update of the Four-Stage QA Process Guidelines in August 2014.

Total Summary Accreditation Reports online: 512
Initial Evaluation (IE): 39
Learning Programme Accreditation (LPA): 84
Initial Evaluation + Learning Programme Accreditation (IE + LPA): 23
Learning Programme Re-accreditation (Re-LPA): 308
Learning Programme Accreditation + Learning Programme Re-accreditation (LPA + Re-LPA): 53
Initial Evaluation + Learning Programme Accreditation + Learning Programme Re-accreditation (IE + LPA + Re-LPA): 1
Programme Area Accreditation (PAA): 12
Periodic Review (PR): 1
Programme Area Accreditation + Periodic Review (PAA + PR): 1

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Feature

Professor Adrian Walter, AM, Director of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, shares his views on the impact and benefits of accreditation

At its best an accreditation process is a highly professional, positive, collaborative and enriching experience. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts’ recent PAA process with the HKCAAVQ proved to be just that.

The team from HKCAAVQ, in particular their Academic Accreditation & Assessment unit and the Qualifications Framework & Qualifications Register unit, handled the entire process in a highly professional and appropriate manner. Communication with the team was efficient and effective, in particular the preparation, arrangement and delivery of the site visit programme and site tours.

Guidance Notes for the Accreditation exercise were clear and concise with useful examples and indicative timelines.

Academy staff found the sessions where they met with the HKCAAVQ Panel both affable and engaging. The sessions also presented many opportunities to receive useful feedback and to exchange and share ideas and experiences with peers.

Meetings were scheduled between the Panel and Academy students and alumni of all five Schools who felt positively engaged in the discussions and left the meetings with a feeling that their input was both welcome and valued. Current students were also pleased to have the opportunity to meet with Panel members to share their work during their practice and rehearsal sessions.

A unique feature of the Academy is the practice base of its core work which can only be fully appreciated by direct experience of the performance activities themselves. The quality of the teaching programmes is mirrored by the quality of the practical training and the outcome of the performances themselves with documentation providing a further contextual and pedagogical framework. This is an aspect of the Academy’s work that has always been understood by the HKCAAVQ in their accreditation work and embraced as an important aspect of site visits.

As well as the obvious benefits of achieving PAA status at Level 6, the process itself had additional benefits for the Academy by facilitating institutional self-reflection, which by its very nature, ranged across all the key areas of the Academy’s operations.

Another major benefit of the process was the opportunity for enhanced staff engagement in the Academy’s academic and operational processes.

Benchmarking is now an important part of the institution’s ongoing review and quality assurance processes. The quality of the review panel ensured that maximum benefit was gained from the insights of the leading practitioners who were involved.

All staff appreciated the thorough preparation of the panel and the effort they had made to become familiar with the work of the Academy. At the same time, it was clear that the panel was using the meetings to also learn more about the Academy’s work and to more fully understand the broader educational, social and institutional context within which it delivered its programmes.

There was always a feeling that we were being helped rather than audited, and that the panel was making every effort to be even handed and impartial in their work. This became evident in the final report that had many insightful comments that would be a useful basis for future discussions and reflection. While affirming good practice the report at the same time identified areas for further development. The Academy always welcomes new insights into its work and how this might align with best practice locally, regionally and internationally.

In summing up the experience, a range of descriptors come to mind:

- Positive
- Engaging
- Affirmative
- Respectful
- Collaborative
- Quality focused

At the conclusion of the process, the Academy was left with the feeling that it had been involved in a meaningful and collaborative process driven by a deeply rooted quality agenda. Furthermore, a process where all participants wished to ensure that the very best educational opportunities are made available to students in Hong Kong – opportunities that are equal to the best in the world.

We believe that together the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and the HKCAAVQ have indeed achieved this.
Latest Update

Liaison Panels for the Two Accreditation Units

In the INQAAHE External Review report, the Panel recommended that HKCAAVQ establishes a mechanism to enhance the current method of ensuring Operators’ input to the agency and facilitate two-way communication more generally.

At its meeting in March 2016, the HKCAAVQ Council took the recommendation on board and in view of the different clientele and key stakeholders, approved the setting up of two Liaison Panels for the two accreditation units. Both Panels comprise stakeholders including operators, specialists and professional bodies.

The two Panels differ in membership but share the same terms of reference as follows:
• To discuss developments in education and training in Hong Kong;
• To provide feedback on HKCAAVQ’s accreditation services;
• To share information about developments in quality assurance approaches;
• To provide input to HKCAAVQ on new policy initiatives or review of existing policies and processes; and
• To provide feedback for HKCAAVQ to liaise with stakeholders.

The first meetings of Liaison Panel for Academic Accreditation and Liaison Panel for Accreditation of Vocational and Professional Education and Training were held on 22 July 2016 and 3 August 2016 respectively. The meetings were found useful by both Panels as a platform for dialogue. More information can be found at a designated webpage for Liaison Panels on HKCAAVQ’s website at http://www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/en/about-us/liaison_panels.

Review of Generic Level Descriptors of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework

HKCAAVQ has been commissioned by the Education Bureau to review the Generic Level Descriptors (GLD) and to develop Practical Tools associated with various purposes of the GLD, including education and training, human resources management and benchmarking. The project commenced in early August 2016 and is anticipated to be completed in May 2017.

The existing GLD has been in place since 2004 for pilot exercises and other preparatory work before the launch of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) in 2008. The seven-level hierarchy and the four domains of outcomes of the GLD fit the qualification systems under the HKQF. Feedback gathered from various user groups of the GLD during the HKQF-European QF Comparability Study completed in early 2016 suggests the need to review the GLD and to refine the descriptors to better reflect the outcome standards at each QF level for clarity and user-friendliness.

The review will take stock of Hong Kong stakeholders’ experience in using the GLD, including but not limited to suggested refinements and ideas for mechanisms to support their use of the GLD, making reference to international good practices identified from countries and regions with experience of having national QFs, such as the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

The project is the first review of the GLD since its launch and the findings will lay the foundation for refined GLD to support application by stakeholders in the coming years. This will mark an important milestone of the development of HKQF.

Accreditation of Online Learning Programmes

With the advancement in technology and proliferation of internet access, online delivery, ranging from blended to fully online delivery, plays an important role in the education landscape in many countries. HKCAAVQ has been approached by a number of local and non-local institutions and organisations seeking to have their online learning programmes accredited in Hong Kong and recognised under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF).

For the purpose of HKCAAVQ accreditation, in cases where online delivery is used for the majority of the teaching and learning activities, such learning programmes will be defined as online learning programmes.

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For the purpose of HKCAAVQ accreditation, in cases where online delivery is used for the majority of the teaching and learning activities, such learning programmes will be defined as online learning programmes.

Research suggests that the quality of online learning programmes can be assessed by the same standards and criteria as that in face-to-face delivery mode with some adaptation of the evidence requirements to fit the particular characteristics of online delivery. The findings also suggest that, with additional evidence requirements applicable to the context of online delivery, the same standards for Learning Programme Accreditation and Learning Programme Re-accreditation under the existing HKCAAVQ’s Four-stage Quality Assurance Process can be applied to accreditation of online learning programmes.

A pilot exercise is being conducted to test out this accreditation service. After the pilot exercise, HKCAAVQ will conduct an evaluation of the exercise to take the lessons learned into consideration. With the approval of the Council, the accreditation service for online learning programmes is expected to be rolled out by the end of 2017 with briefing and training workshops for interested institutions and organisations. This service will be applicable to both local and non-local learning programmes.

Updates of the Guidance Notes

An updated version of the Guidance Notes on Initial Evaluation (IE), Learning Programme Accreditation (LPA) and Learning Programme Re-accreditation (Re-LPA) (Guidance Notes) was published on 15 October 2016. The “Facilitation Phase” is now also part of the Stage 1 “IE” and Stage 2 “LPA” of the Four-stage Quality Assurance Process. To facilitate the Operators’ understanding of how the “Facilitation Phase” is put to use, the Guidance Notes have been updated to that effect.

There are two approaches under the “Facilitation Phase”: the “Preview Approach” and “Customised Approach”. While the former is to help operators better prepare for accreditation by providing initial observations and feedback on their draft accreditation documents, the latter provides those operators with a solid track record with an opportunity for a differentiated accreditation approach. Some examples of the customised approach are focused submission, streamlined accreditation process and paper-based review.

Details of the two approaches are provided in the Guidance Notes.
United Kingdom

• UK NARIC and the National Centre for Schooling Development Programme of the Ministry of Education China (CSDP) launched a new joint project to help China develop a National Qualifications Framework for the cultural and creative industries and tourism management.

USA

• The Center for American Progress released a report titled “A Quality Alternative: A New Vision for Higher Education Accreditation” which outlines a vision for an alternative gatekeeping system for granting access to federal financial aid. Click here to download the report.

Local News Roundup

• The Arboriculture and Horticulture Industry Training Advisory Committee (A&H ITAC) under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) was established on 1 October 2016. Click here to view the membership.

• The Government will subsidise 1,062 students to pursue full-time, local self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines in the 2017/18 academic year. Healthcare, architecture and engineering, testing and certification, the creative industry, logistics, and tourism and hospitality will be covered by the scheme. Click here for details.

• The Education Bureau signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Quality & Qualifications Ireland on the development of the Qualifications Framework. The MoU provides a framework for collaboration between Hong Kong and the Irish organisation and is expected to strengthen the partnership to develop and implement the Qualifications Framework in both places. Click here for details.

• The Government announced that the Hong Kong branches of Savannah College of Art & Design and the University of Chicago Booth School of Business are allowed to admit Mainland students to designated locally accredited non-local degree programmes at prescribed maximum numbers for the 2016/17 to 2020/21 academic years.

Contact us

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