



香港學術及職業資歷評審局  
Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of  
Academic & Vocational Qualifications

**ACCREDITATION REPORT**

**TUNG WAH COLLEGE**

**INITIAL EVALUATION AND  
LEARNING PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN NURSING**

**JULY 2025**

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Appendix 1   HKCAAVQ Panel Membership

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## **1. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1.1 Based on the Service Agreement (No.: AA1054), the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), in the capacity of the Accreditation Authority as provided for under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (AAVQO) (Cap. 592), was commissioned by Tung Wah College (the College / the Operator) to conduct a combined exercise of Initial Evaluation and Learning Programme Accreditation with the following Terms of Reference:

- (a) To conduct an accreditation test as provided for in the AAVQO to determine whether the Operator meets the stated objectives and is competent to operate learning programmes that meet the QF Level 7 standards, and can be granted Initial Evaluation Status at QF Level 7;
- (b) To conduct an accreditation test as provided for in the AAVQO to determine whether the Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing programme (PhD(N) / the Programme) of the Operator meets the stated objectives and QF standards and can be offered as an accredited programme; and
- (c) To issue to the Operator an accreditation report setting out the results of the determination in relation to (a) and (b) by HKCAAVQ.

## **2. HKCAAVQ'S DETERMINATION**

### **Initial Evaluation**

2.1 HKCAAVQ has determined that, subject to the fulfilment of the conditions set out below, the College meets the stated objectives and is competent to operate learning programmes that meet the QF Level 7 standard, and can be granted an Initial Evaluation (IE) status at QF Level 7.

### **2.2 Validity Period**

2.2.1 The validity period will, provided that the Operator fulfils all pre-conditions to the commencement of the validity period set out in Section 2.4, commence on the date specified below. Operators may

apply to HKCAAVQ to vary the commencement date of the validity period. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.3 The determinations of the IE status are specified as follows:

<b>Name of Operator</b>	Tung Wah College
<b>Address of Operator</b>	31 Wylie Road, Homantin, Kowloon
<b>Highest QF Level of programme(s) which the Operator can operate upon successful learning programme accreditation</b>	Level 7
<b>Start date of 2-year validity period of Initial Evaluation (IE) accreditation status</b>	1 January 2026
<b>Scope of IE Accreditation Status</b>	For local programmes operating in Hong Kong

2.4 **Conditions**

Pre-conditions

2.4.1 The College is to ensure that a proper organisational structure for the management, oversight and support for the research postgraduate and professional doctorate programmes is in place by

- (a) completing the formal review and approval process and obtaining the relevant approvals, for its proposed revised organisational structure involving restructuring the Division of Postgraduate Studies (DPS) of the School of Nursing and the College-level Graduate Research Office (GRO); and
- (b) establishing the GRO according to its terms of reference and functions as planned, and appointing the relevant staff and additional manpower specific for the GRO based on its planned initial staffing structure and appointment requirements to ensure the GRO's operations and functions to be properly and effectively implemented.

The College is to submit the relevant information to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-condition on or before **31 October 2025**, including but not limited to the relevant approval records, formal documents and documentation, and staffing information of the GRO, demonstrating the readiness of its organisational structure (Para. 4.1.9).

- 2.4.2 The College is to ensure that formal and comprehensive documentation that governs the operation of research and postgraduate programmes is in place by reviewing and revising if appropriate relevant formal documents, including but not limited to the relevant manuals, guidelines, policies and regulation documents, such as academic regulations and policy documents, quality assurance manual and student handbook, to ensure that the relevant elements relating to research and postgraduate programmes and students are included and consistently and thoroughly documented, and the revised structure for the College's management, oversight and support for research postgraduate and professional doctorate programmes is properly reflected.

The College is to submit the relevant information to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-condition on or before **31 October 2025**, demonstrating that proper documentation is in place (Para. 4.4.5).

## 2.5 **Recommendations**

HKCAAVQ also offers the following recommendations for the continuous improvement of the Operator.

- 2.5.1 The College should review and consider establishing a College-level Graduate School or a similar unit/division in the long run to take up the responsibility of academic and strategic leadership for its postgraduate education and programmes when the College has more postgraduate programmes in the future. (Para. 4.1.8)
- 2.5.2 The College should keep monitoring the quality of feedback and input of the external advisors/examiners and students to ensure their quality and proper documentation. (Para. 4.4.4)
- 2.5.3 The College should continue to implement effective measures to have continuous monitoring of student progression and outcomes, especially for research postgraduate students. (Para. 4.4.5)

- 2.5.4 The College should maintain a rigorous review, update and monitoring of various documentations of policies, guidelines, information and templates relating to quality assurance and postgraduate programmes. (Para. 4.4.5)

### **Learning Programme Accreditation**

- 2.6 HKCAAVQ has determined that, subject to the fulfilment of the conditions set out below, the Programme meets the stated objectives and QF standard at Level 7. Subject to the approval by the Chief Executive in Council or Education Bureau (as delegated according to the Cap. 320 Amendment Bill), the Programme can be offered as an accredited programme with a validity period of four years.

- 2.7 In order for the validity period to take effect, the Operator must be registered as a Post Secondary College under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) and it must comply with any restrictions stipulated in the Institutional Review (IR) Report. The authority for registration under Cap. 320 rests with the Permanent Secretary for Education who may take into account of the outcome of the IR Report and other considerations as deemed necessary.

### **2.8 Validity Period**

- 2.8.1 The validity period will, provided that the Operator fulfills all pre-conditions to the commencement of the validity period as set out in Section 2.10, commence on the date specified below. Operators may apply to HKCAAVQ to vary the commencement date of the validity period. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 2.9 The determinations on the Programme are specified as follows:

<b>Name of Operator</b>	Tung Wah College
<b>Name of Award Granting Body</b>	Tung Wah College
<b>Title of Learning Programme</b>	Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing 護理學哲學博士

<b>Title of Qualification(s) [Exit Award(s)]</b>	Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing 護理學哲學博士
<b>Primary Area of Study and Training</b>	Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences
<b>Sub-area (Primary Area of Study and Training)</b>	Nursing
<b>Other Area of Study and Training</b>	Not applicable
<b>Sub-area (Other Area of Study and Training)</b>	Not applicable
<b>QF Level</b>	Level 7
<b>QF Credits</b>	273
<b>Mode(s) of Delivery and Programme Length</b>	Full-time: 3 years Part-time: 4 years
<b>Intermediate Exit Award</b>	Title of Qualification: Master of Philosophy in Nursing 護理學哲學碩士  QF Level: Level 6
<b>Start Date of Validity Period</b>	1 January 2026
<b>End Date of Validity Period</b>	31 December 2029
<b>Number of Enrolment(s)</b>	Two enrolments per year
<b>Maximum Number of New Students</b>	6 per year (including full-time and part-time students)  (maximum number of new students and active students in the programme at any time is 24)
<b>Specification of Competency Standards-based Programme</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

<b>Specification of Generic Competencies-based Programme</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Vocational Qualifications Pathway Programme</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Address of Teaching / Training Venue(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. King's Park Campus, Ma Kam Chan Memorial Building, 31 Wylie Road, Homantin, Kowloon, Hong Kong</li> <li>2. Mongkok Campus, Cheung Kung Hai Memorial Building, 90A, and Cheung Chin Lan Hong Building, 98, Shantung Street, Mongkok, Hong Kong</li> <li>3. Kwai Hing Campus, 16/F, Tower 2, Kowloon Commerce Centre, 51 Kwai Cheong Road, Kwai Chung, Hong Kong</li> <li>4. Tsim Sha Tsui Campus, 2/F, 4/F, 5/F and 6/F, Tsim Sha Tsui District Kaifong Welfare Association, 136A Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong</li> </ol>

## 2.10 Condition

### Pre-condition

- 2.10.1 The College is to ensure that students acquire an English proficiency standard of IELTS 6.5 or equivalent prior to admission to the Programme by removing the option of using the College's Academic English Advancement Course for Research Students to meet the English proficiency requirements.

The College is to submit the relevant information and approval records to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-condition on or before **31 October 2025** (Para. 4.6.2).

## 2.11 Recommendations

HKCAAVQ also offers the following recommendations for continuous improvement of the Programme.

- 2.11.1 The College should continue to review and consider providing elective courses to the students of the Programme. (Para. 4.7.2)
- 2.11.2 The College should consider providing opportunities for students to attach to laboratories, research centres or organisations for the purpose of having more research training and enhancing research exposure, research skills and teaching skills. (Para. 4.8.4)
- 2.11.3 The College should continue to review and monitor regularly the manpower and workload of the programme team and student supervision, consider recruiting new academic staff to take up teaching and student supervision duties if needed, and continue to train junior academic staff to take up the role of supervisor through structured training and mentoring programmes. (Para. 4.9.3)
- 2.11.4 The College should continue to monitor and enhance as appropriate the resources and support to postgraduate students, especially training in qualitative and quantitative research methods and data analysis, financial support for conference and research, and support for non-local students. (Para. 4.10.5)
- 2.12 HKCAAVQ will subsequently satisfy itself on whether the Operator remains competent to achieve the relevant objectives and the Programme continues to meet the standard to achieve the relevant objectives as claimed by the Operator by reference to, amongst other things, the Operator's fulfilment of any conditions and compliance with any restrictions stipulated in this Accreditation Report. For the avoidance of doubt, maintenance of accreditation status is subject to the fulfilment of any condition and compliance with any restriction stipulated in this Accreditation Report. During the validity period, HKCAAVQ may request the Operator to provide evidence, such as admission related information, to demonstrate that the Operator and the Programme continue to comply with the determinations and meet the relevant accreditation standards.

### **3. INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1 Tung Wah College (the Operator / the College) was incorporated in 2010 as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs) and operates independently as a self-financing institution. The College underwent an Institution Review by HKCAAVQ in September 2010, and was successfully registered under the Post

Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) to offer Bachelor's Degree programmes from the 2011/12 academic year onwards. The College is currently operating 19 HKCAAVQ-accredited programmes at the Bachelor and sub-degree levels. In addition, the College has PAA status under two programme areas, "Occupational Therapy" and "Biological Sciences", at QF Level 5.

- 3.2 The College commissioned HKCAAVQ to conduct a combined exercise of Initial Evaluation (IE) at QF Level 7 and Learning Programme Accreditation for the Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing programme (the Programme). HKCAAVQ formed an expert Panel (the Panel) for this accreditation exercise (Panel Membership at **Appendix 1**), and a site visit by the Panel was conducted at the Operator's campus on 9, 14 and 15 April 2025. HKCAAVQ's *Manual for the Four-stage Quality Assurance Process under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (Version 1.2, November 2020)* was the guiding document for the College and the Panel.

#### **4. PANEL'S DELIBERATIONS**

*The following presents the Panel's deliberations on a range of issues pertinent to its major findings. For aspects of the accreditation standards where no observations are made they are considered to be appropriately addressed by the Operator.*

##### **Initial Evaluation**

#### **4.1 Organisational Governance and Management**

*The governing body of the Operator has clearly defined and appropriate educational/training objectives, and has implemented a management structure to realise those objectives, for the delivery of learning programme(s) that fall within the scope of the HKQF level(s) sought.*

- 4.1.1 The Panel was provided with information on the institutional governance and management structure of the College, including the Terms of Reference (ToR) and composition of various boards and committees, as well as the organisational structure of the College, and was given to understand that its governance and management structure has been established in compliance with the requirements of the Cap. 320 and the relevant Regulations (Cap. 320A).

- 4.1.2 The Board of Governors (BoG) is the supreme governing body responsible for setting the mission and vision as well as strategic directions of the College. The College Council (CC) is the executive body of the College administering the property and managing the general affairs of the College subject to the directions of the BoG.
- 4.1.3 Under the BoG and CC, there are various committees overseeing specific aspects of college governance. Under the BoG, Audit Committee (AC) assists the BoG in overseeing the College's financial reporting process, audit process, system of internal controls, and compliance with laws, regulations and policies. Under the CC, Human Resources Committee (HRC), Main Tender Board, Foundation Governing Committee, Finance Committee (FC) and Honorary Fellowship Committee oversee the management and deployment of finance and human resources of the College. Reporting to the AC of the BoG and the President of the College, there is an Internal Audit Unit (IAU) under the supervision of the AC to support the BoG in the assessment and improvement of the College's internal control framework, risk management and compliance processes.
- 4.1.4 In terms of the management of the College, the Panel noted the following:
- (a) Five essential committees, chaired by the President of the College, assist the President in overseeing the management of the academic and administrative matters of the College, namely Academic Board (AB), Management Board (MB), Staff Establishment and Review Committee (SERC), Budget Committee (BC), and President's Executive Committee (PEC).
  - (b) The AB is responsible for regulating and approving all academic affairs of the College. Reporting to the AB, there is a School Board (SB), under each of the four Schools, to oversee the operation, management, development and quality assurance of the School's programmes and other academic-related matters. Under the AB, a number of committees have been in place to oversee the development, implementation, review and improvement of the academic programmes and activities of the College, including the SBs, Academic Regulations Committee (ARC), Examinations Board (EB), General Education Committee (GEC), Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), Research Committee (RC), Research Ethics Committee (REC),

Student Appeals Committee (SAC), and Student Disciplinary Committee (SDC).

- (c) The MB is to advise on matters relating to the strategic development and management of the College and provides input on any academic initiatives from management perspectives (including human resources, finance and campus resources). The MB is supported by six sub-committees, namely Appeal Committee, Facilities and Campus Development Committee, Grievance and Complaint Committee, Staff Disciplinary Committee, Student Affairs Committee, and College Admission, Promotion and Publicity Committee.

4.1.5 The President of the College is the principal academic and administrative officer, and holds the ultimate accountability to the CC for the daily management and development of the College under the overall direction of the BoG. The President is assisted by two Vice Presidents, namely the Vice President (Academic) and the Vice President (Administration & Development), in the development and management of the College. Other key officers of the College include School Deans, and Head of three academic support units (Quality Assurance Office, Registry, and Research Office) and seven administrative units (Communications and Public Relations Office, Facilities Management Office, Finance Office (FO), Human Resources Office (RO), Information Technology Services Office (ITSO), Library, and Student Affairs Office (SAO)).

4.1.6 In terms of management of research of the College, the RC reporting to the AB is responsible for developing and reviewing the College's research directions, plans, policies, and regulations to approve and monitor research projects. The RC is supported by the RO regarding to administrative support and professional support to develop research practices among staff and students, including coordinating grant submissions and research collaborations, organising research seminars, and providing guidelines for conducting research. Meanwhile, the REC provides advice on matters of research ethics, and addresses health, safety and environmental concerns relating to research. From the accreditation documents and the College's *Response to the Panel's Initial Comments*, the Panel was also given to understand that the College had established four research theme groups led by senior academic staff in the respective disciplines, namely "Mental Health and Wellbeing", "Use of Technology in Healthcare", "Health Professional Education", and "Cancer Care", and the College had its 5-year Research Strategic Plan, in alignment

with its vision and mission, as well as its academic planning for the coming five years.

- 4.1.7 In relation to the governance, management and oversight of the College's postgraduate education and programmes, the Panel was given to understand that the College deploys the existing established governance framework and mechanisms for academic oversight and quality assurance through its committees/boards and Schools, as also described in paragraph 4.1.4. The AB is responsible for regulating and approving all academic affairs including postgraduate education and programmes of the College, with the assistance/endorsement of the QAC, such as development and implementation of academic quality assurance and policies relating to postgraduate education, proposals and developments of new postgraduate programmes, programme review and improvement, teaching and learning as well as assessment.
- 4.1.8 Further to the above, in terms of the management and oversight of research postgraduate programmes of the College, as in the College's *Response to the Panel's Initial Comments*, the College proposed, with a revised organisational structure, to establish a College-level Graduate Research Office (GRO) led by the Vice President (Academic), to be responsible for managing and overseeing its research postgraduate degrees and professional doctoral degrees, as a central administration unit with the functions and responsibilities including conducting regular reviews of relevant policies, coordinating relevant academic matters, overseeing student selection and admission, providing research support and student support, coordinating graduate research activities, supporting and overseeing research at the graduate level, overseeing quality assurance of programmes, etc. The GRO, as informed by the College, will start with an initial structure before the launch of the first research postgraduate programme PhD(N), and will be fully functional by the AY2025/26, with additional headcounts of administrative staff specifically for supporting the operations of the GRO and coordinating for research postgraduate programmes of the College. At the School-level, any Schools of the College which intends to develop research or postgraduate programmes has to establish its Division of Postgraduate Studies (DPS), which reports to its SB ensuring that the School manages its postgraduate offerings in alignment with institutional policies, standards, and quality assurance. The Panel **recommended** that the College should review and consider establishing a College-level Graduate School or a similar unit/division in the long run to take up the responsibility of academic and strategic leadership for its postgraduate education

and programmes when the College has more postgraduate programmes in the future.

- 4.1.9 Having reviewed the accreditation documents and discussed with the College's management staff at the site visit meetings, the Panel was given to understand that the proposal of establishing the GRO at the College-level had been endorsed by the PEC and the MB and was pending for the final approval by the CC. To ensure that the College has a proper organisational structure in place for the management, oversight and support for its postgraduate programmes, the Panel therefore stipulated the pre-condition below. The Panel also **advised** the College to continue to achieve the full functioning of the GRO as planned and the appointments of GRO's full headcount including managers and executive officers.

**Pre-condition**

The College is to ensure that a proper organisational structure for the management, oversight and support for the research postgraduate and professional doctorate programmes is in place by

- (a) completing the formal review and approval process and obtaining the relevant approvals, for its proposed revised organisational structure involving restructuring the Division of Postgraduate Studies (DPS) of the School of Nursing and the College-level Graduate Research Office (GRO); and
- (b) establishing the GRO according to its terms of reference and functions as planned, and appointing the relevant staff and additional manpower specific for the GRO based on its planned initial staffing structure and appointment requirements to ensure the GRO's operations and functions to be properly and effectively implemented.

The College is to submit the relevant information to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-condition on or before **31 October 2025**, including but not limited to the relevant approval records, formal documents and documentation, and staffing information of the GRO, demonstrating the readiness of its organisational structure.

## 4.2 Financial Viability and Resources Management

*The Operator must have adequate financial and physical resources to achieve its educational/training objectives, with well-defined systems and processes to manage its finances to support the quality and effectiveness of its operation.*

- 4.2.1 The College has its Finance Policy to guide the financial management of the College with a set of Financial Regulations and Procedures (FRPs) detailing the relevant operational procedures. The Financial Policy and FRPs are regularly reviewed every five years and when necessary to assess its effectiveness. The Panel noted that the previous review of the FRPs was completed in 2022, approved by the FC.
- 4.2.2 The CC holds the final authority for all fiscal or financial management matters of the College, unless otherwise determined by the BoG. The FC, formed under the CC, is delegated the authority to deal with the overall financial and accounting matters of the College, including FRPs and recurrent and capital expenditure budgets. Under the FC, the Investment Sub-Committee (IC) serves as a decision-making mechanism for the College's investments. The PEC considers matters of strategic and operational significance for the College, including matters under consideration by other committees with significant financial or resource implications and academic issues with significant resource implications. Financial issues to be submitted to the FC and/or CC for reporting and approval should go through the MB.
- 4.2.3 The FO of the College is responsible for the maintenance of the College's books and accounts, the provision of financial services to units, and the provision of timely management information to budget holders and College management. The FO also gives advice to the FC on the financial implications of business proposals and development projects.
- 4.2.4 For this accreditation exercise, HKCAAVQ engaged a Financial Expert (FE) to review information in relation to the financial viability of the College. Upon review of the documents provided by the College, which included (a) the five-year financial plans/projections of the College from AY2024/25 to AY2028/29, (b) the audited financial statements of the College from AY2020/21 to AY2023/24, (c) the five-year financial projections covering the PhD(N) programme from AY2024/25 to 2029/30, and (d) the College's *Response to the Panel's Initial Comments*, the Financial Expert

considered that the College has adequate financial resources to achieve its educational objectives. The Panel noted that the budget plan for the GRO will be included in the Colleges' overall budget from AY2025/26 such that adequate resources will be allocated to support the development of postgraduate programmes across the College. During the site visit meetings, the Panel noted the commitments made by the BoG and College management to provide continuous financial support for the development and delivery of the PhD(N) programme, even in the absence of a surplus at the programme level.

- 4.2.5 The College provided information on its physical resources in supporting its educational objectives, including its teaching venues and capacities at its campuses, library, computing facilities and laboratories. During the site visit meetings, the College provided the Panel with a tour of its facilities to demonstrate its physical resources for supporting its provision of learning programmes up to QF Level 7.
- 4.2.6 In consideration of the information above, the Panel considered that the College has adequate financial and physical resources to achieve its educational objectives with well-defined systems and processes to manage its finances to support the quality of its operation.

### 4.3 **Organisational Staffing**

*The Operator must be able to engage staff who are competent to manage its operations, to lead programme planning and development, and to support the delivery of learning programme(s) up to the claimed HKQF level(s).*

- 4.3.1 The College provided the following information expounding its institutional staffing and staff development to support the delivery of learning programmes at QF Level 7:
- (a) Staffing structure of academic and administrative staff of the College;
  - (b) Staffing structure of the GRO, as well as staff's roles, responsibilities and required qualifications;
  - (c) Institutional mechanisms and processes governing staff workload, remuneration, promotion and performance appraisal;
  - (d) Regulations on Promotion;
  - (e) Revised Workload Allocation Framework for Academic Staff (R-WAF);
  - (f) Guidelines on Succession Planning;

- (g) Staff Appointment Criteria for academic staff and administrative staff;
- (h) Profile of the management and teaching staff of the PhD(N) programme, including their academic and professional qualifications, teaching and research expertise areas, and recent publications; and
- (i) Staff Handbook.

4.3.2 Regarding the College's staffing arrangements, the Panel observed the following arrangements:

- (a) The HRC, under the CC, oversees the HR policies and management of the College.
- (b) The SERC assists the President in formulating policies for new staff establishments and staff development, as well as reviewing staff performance appraisals and re-appointment cases.
- (c) The College has in place its R-WAF for academic staff, which serves as a general framework to provide generic principles in academic workload allocation for research-track and teaching-track staff.
- (d) The College sets a Staff-to-Student Ratio (SSR) at a comparable level for all programmes. For degree and sub-degree programmes, the overall SSR is normally set at 1:25, calculated based on the full capacity of the student admission quota. For programmes that lead to professional registration or recognition, the ratio may be adjusted to meet the requirements stipulated by the respective professional bodies.

4.3.3 Regarding staff appointment criteria, the Panel noted that the College has its appointment criteria for academic and administrative staff. In addition, having reviewed the College's *Response to Panel's Initial Comments* and discussed with the College in the site visit meetings, the Panel noted the minimum appointment criteria for supervisors and co-supervisors of research postgraduate students and related arrangements as below. Relating to the proper documentation of the information below in formal policy and guideline documents, the Panel put forward a relevant recommendation in paragraph 4.4.5.

Chief Supervisors:

- (a) be a full-time academic staff member at the rank of Assistant Professor or above; and
- (b) possess a doctoral degree; and
- (c) demonstrate proven research experience and quality research output in an appropriate field of study; and
- (d) normally have successful experience supervising doctoral studies as Chief Supervisor.

A full-time academic staff member who meets criteria (a) to (c) above and has successfully co-supervised at least one PhD student may be considered for the role of Chief Supervisor under the mentorship of a senior academic staff member qualified to serve as the Chief Supervisor.

Co-supervisors:

- (a) possess a doctoral degree; and
- (b) hold the rank of Assistant Professor or above; and
- (c) demonstrate proven research experience in an appropriate field of study related to the programme.

Other related arrangements:

- (a) Each PhD student is normally supervised by one Chief Supervisor and a Co-supervisor.
- (b) Assistant Professors with less research supervision experience may serve as a Co-supervisor.
- (c) When deemed appropriate, an additional non-academic Co-supervisor may be appointed. The appointee should hold a doctoral degree and possess specific experience and expertise directly related to the research project. Alternatively, a non-academic professional without a doctoral degree may be appointed as a Co-supervisor if they possess highly relevant expertise that would significantly benefit the PhD student's research. In such cases, their appointment must be justified by their unique contributions to the project and approved by the respective DPS.
- (d) For taught postgraduate programmes, academic staff at the rank of Assistant Professor or above are eligible to serve as capstone project/dissertation supervisors.

4.3.4 On staff development, the Panel was provided with the following information:

- (a) A list of activities (co-)organised by the Research Theme Groups of the College in AY2023/24;
- (b) A list of activities of the Research Development Programmes from AY2021/22 to AY2023/24;
- (c) A list of Learning and Teaching Seminars (LTSs) from AY2016/17 to AY2023/24;
- (d) A list of projects funded by the College Research Grant (CRG) and School Research Grant (SRG) from AY2021/22 to AY2023/24;
- (e) A list of allocation of Staff Development and Research Fund (SDRF) of the College in AY2024/25;
- (f) A summary of external grant records from AY2021/22 to AY2024/25;
- (g) A list of publications of NUR staff from AY2022/23 to AY2023/24; and
- (h) Research Operation Handbook

4.3.5 Having reviewed the information above and accreditation documents, the Panel had the following observations:

- (a) The College has a mechanism in place for allocating resources for staff development, and measures are in place to incentivise academic staff to pursue professional development.
- (b) The College has organised theme-based lectures, training workshops and seminars for staff, to enhance staff knowledge of research concepts, methodologies, research grant application and publication skills, and pedagogical skills, as in its Research Development Programmes for academic staff.
- (c) The College provides an Academic Staff Professional Development Programme for academic staff, including a one-on-one mentorship scheme in which experienced academic staff coach and provide guidance to new and young academic staff. In addition, new full-time academic staff of Associate Professor rank or below are strongly encouraged to complete a 10-hour online Academic Staff Induction Course and attend at least three LTSs on various themes in the first year of service.
- (d) The College offers internal grants (i.e., College Teaching Grant, CRG and SRG from SDRF) to support staff research by providing seed funding for promising research initiatives,

particularly those with potential for international collaborations and external funding, and offers sponsorship to staff for pursuing award-bearing programmes.

- (e) The Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL) of the College will develop a comprehensive training programme specifically for supervisors, including workshops on advanced mentoring techniques, effective communication strategies, conflict resolution, and best practices for providing constructive feedback. These workshops/trainings will be designed to help supervisors navigate the academic and emotional challenges faced by research postgraduate students and stay updated on the latest developments in their fields. Implementation of this training will begin prior to the launch of the PhD(N) programme.

- 4.3.6 In relation to the GRO's establishment and staffing, the Panel noted from its staffing structure and the College's *Response to Initial Comments* that the Head of GRO reports directly to the Vice President (Academic) and participates in the AB, MB and other committees/boards of the College, and is assisted by two Administrative Managers and three Executive Officers in the GRO. The requirements of the Head include significant research achievements, extensive administrative experience and a strategic vision to advance the Colleges' postgraduate education, a doctoral degree and knowledge of quality assurance in higher education. The GRO, as also mentioned in paragraphs 4.1.8 and 4.1.9, will start with an initial structure before the launch of the first research postgraduate programme PhD(N), and will be fully functional by the AY2025/26 with the additional headcount of managers and officers.
- 4.3.7 Further to the above, having discussed with the College in the site visit, the Panel was also given to understand that the College was going to recruit additional staff for the development and support for the postgraduate education and students of the College, for example, additional headcounts for RO, SAO and Library.
- 4.3.8 Having reviewed the information above and discussed with the staff of the College in the site visit meetings, the Panel formed the view that the College is able to engage staff who are competent to manage its operations, to lead programme planning and development, and to support the delivery of learning programmes at QF Level 7.

#### 4.4 Organisational Quality Assurance

*The Operator must have an internal quality assurance system that can support effective management and monitoring of the quality of its learning programme(s) in delivering learning outcomes that align with the GLDs of the HKQF, to meet its educational/training objectives.*

4.4.1 The College provided the following information to illustrate its institutional quality assurance (QA) system to support the management and monitoring of the quality of learning programmes up to QF Level 7:

- (a) Quality Assurance Manual (QAM);
- (b) Academic Regulations for PhD(N);
- (c) Terms of Reference, composition and membership of the relevant boards and committees of the College (e.g. AB, ARC, QAC, SB, DPS of NUR) and Key functions of GRO;
- (d) College Assessment Policy;
- (e) Guidelines for Research Conduct and Integrity;
- (f) Guidelines for Examiners for PhD(N);
- (g) Grading Scheme for PhD(N);
- (h) Guidelines and Procedures on Handling Grievance, Complaint and Appeal;
- (i) Research Ethics Committee – Operational Guidelines and Procedures;
- (j) Research Operation Handbook;
- (k) Regulations on Conflict of Interest;
- (l) Regulations on Acceptance of Gift/Advantage and Entertainment;
- (m) Staff Handbook;
- (n) Generative AI and ChatGPT Using Guidelines;
- (o) Template of Interview Assessment Form for PhD(N) Programme;
- (p) Template of Nomination Form for Examination Panel Member (External / Internal);
- (q) Template of Chair's Report on Thesis Examination;
- (r) Template of Examiner's Report on a Thesis for the Degree of PhD(N);
- (s) Template of Thesis Approval Report (NUR);
- (t) Template of Employer Survey on PhD(N) Graduates;
- (u) External Advisor Report on the Proposed PhD(N); and
- (v) Internal Validation Report for PhD(N) (August 2024)

4.4.2 The QA system of the College covers the process of planning, developing, delivering, modifying, monitoring and reviewing a programme of study at programme level, and the academic unit's practice at institutional level. The QAM delineates the details of the College's QA system. The QAM outlines the underlying principles, policies, mechanisms, processes and procedures which support the QA and academic standards at the College. The Panel noted the following QA framework and the related committee structure of the College:

- (a) At the college level, the AB chaired by the President oversees all academic matters and advises the CC on the standards of programmes. The AB is assisted by the QAC which has oversight of the QA policies and practices with a view to maintaining a high standard across all programmes within the College.
- (b) The ARC is responsible to the AB for developing and reviewing academic regulations, their implementation, and supporting procedures. The Academic Regulations govern academic operations, ensuring quality and standards.
- (c) The RC reports to the AB and oversees the College's research directions, plans, policies and regulations. The REC advises on research ethics involving human participants and addresses health, safety, and environmental concerns.
- (d) At the school level, SBs report to the AB by making recommendations on the operation, management, development, and quality assurance of the Schools' programmes and other academic matters.
- (e) Programme Area Team (PAT) and Programme Teams (PTs) are responsible for the development, management, delivery, maintenance of the quality and academic standards, and review of a programme area and of its programmes respectively. PTs discuss all issues relating to the programmes and make recommendations to the SB for programme changes and continuous improvement.
- (f) Feedback from different stakeholders such as students, graduates, teaching staff, employers, external advisors, and external examiners is regularly collected for ascertaining the standards of the education provision and its continuous improvement. For instance, students' views are collected

through various means, such as Formative Student Feedback Collection Form, Course and Teaching Evaluation (CTE) questionnaire, New Student Survey, Graduate Survey, and student representation on a number of boards/committees such as Staff-Student Consultative Group (SSCG).

- 4.4.3 In terms of soliciting external advice and input, External Advisors (EAs) and External Examiners (EEs) are engaged as below.
- (a) For EAs, each School forms its own advisory group(s) which are appointed and approved by the AB via endorsement from the SB, at School level and/or programme level to gauge EAs' feedback. Advice of external academics and industry experts are solicited to ensure that programmes are responsive to the needs of industry and community, for the School Dean to consider, comment and take proper follow-up actions as appropriate. Each School has a School Advisory Panel (SAP) which convenes annually and comprises academics and key opinion leaders from various professions and industries to provide guidance on academic development. Each School has one or more Programme Advisory Panels (PROAP) consisting of external members who offer recommendations to ensure curricula align with current standards.
  - (b) EE is appointed for each programme to oversee the assessment and examination system, offer views on the quality and appropriateness of the examination papers where appropriate, review sample examination answer scripts and coursework assignments, and comment on the mapping of assessment tasks against the intended learning outcomes, etc. EE's input and comments are recorded in Annual Programme Review Reports (APRRs). EEs are also required to prepare and submit EE's reports and Annual Programme Reports to the PTs via the School Dean. All the EE's reports are reviewed by the School Board on a regular basis.
- 4.4.4 Further to the review of information above and External Advisor Report for PhD(N), the Panel **recommended** that the College should keep monitoring the quality of feedback and input of the external advisors/examiners and students to ensure their quality and proper documentation.
- 4.4.5 Having reviewed the information above and the College's *Response to Panel's Initial Comments* and discussed with the management staff of the College, the Panel had the observations below:

- (a) The formal “Academic Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing” document provided by the College presented information and narratives specifically for the PhD(N) programme of NUR, as also reflected in its document title. The College should have an updated Academic Regulations (ARs) document which presents relevant policies, mechanisms, processes and procedures that are generally for the College’s research and taught postgraduate programmes up to QF Level 7, and the ARs document should have incorporated the revised structure relating to the GRO of the College and DPSs under Schools of the College, as described in paragraphs 4.1.8 and 4.1.9, as well the associated updates in terms of policies, mechanisms, processes and procedures relating to postgraduate education, programmes and students. The College expressed that the finalised sets of such ARs will be completed in mid-2025.
- (b) Subsequent to the revised structure relating to the GRO and DPS as in paragraphs 4.1.8 and 4.1.9, the QAM should have incorporated the revised structure and the associated updates in terms of policies, mechanisms, processes and procedures relating to postgraduate education, programmes and students.
- (c) Similar to (a) and (b) above, other formal documents and templates relating to postgraduate programmes and students, such as those in paragraph 4.4.1 (e.g. Guidelines for Examiners, Examiner’s Report, Thesis Approval Report), should also be updated accordingly such that they are applicable to all postgraduate programmes and students instead of specifically for PhD(N) and the revised structure and functions of the GRO and DPS are reflected.
- (d) Further to the review of the information above including the ARs, regarding the monitoring of the progression of research students, the Panel considered that measures such as progress report, annual report and forms are helpful for the monitoring and assessment of students’ progress, and **recommended** that the College should continue to implement effective measures to have continuous monitoring of student progression and outcomes, especially for research postgraduate students.
- (e) Relating to selection and appointment of internal and external examiners for postgraduate students, their requirements and arrangements relating to conflict of interest should be detailed

more clearly and consistently among various documents such as ARs and Guidelines for Examiners.

The Panel, therefore, stipulated the following pre-condition.

### **Pre-condition**

The College is to ensure that formal and comprehensive documentation that governs the operation of research and postgraduate programmes is in place by reviewing and revising if appropriate relevant formal documents, including but not limited to the relevant manuals, guidelines, policies and regulation documents, such as academic regulations and policy documents, quality assurance manual and student handbook, to ensure that the relevant elements relating to research and postgraduate programmes and students are included and consistently and thoroughly documented, and the revised structure for the College's management, oversight and support for research postgraduate and professional doctorate programmes is properly reflected.

The College is to submit the relevant information to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-condition on or before **31 October 2025**, demonstrating that proper documentation is in place.

In addition, the Panel **recommended** that the College should maintain a rigorous review, update and monitoring of various documentations of policies, guidelines, information and templates relating to quality assurance and postgraduate programmes.

### **Learning Programme Accreditation**

#### **4.5 Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

*The learning programme must have objectives that address community, education and/or industry needs, with learning outcomes that meet the relevant HKQF standards, for all exit qualifications from the programme.*

- 4.5.1 The Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD(N)) programme is hosted by the School of Nursing (NUR) of the College. Having reviewed the College's *Response to Initial Comments* and discussed with the College in the site visit, the Panel noted the updated Programme Objectives (POs) and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) of the Programme as follows:

PhD(N) POs:

- PO1: To develop students' ability to conduct independent and rigorous research in nursing, focusing on generating new knowledge and contributing to evidence-based practice.
- PO2: To enhance students' research skills, including critical analysis, methodological proficiency, and the ability to effectively communicate research findings within academic and professional settings.
- PO3: To equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to address ethical considerations in nursing research, ensuring responsible conduct and adherence to ethical guidelines.
- PO4: To prepare students to engage in academic and professional discussions in their research area, fostering leadership potential within the research community.

PhD(N) PILOs:

Upon completion of the PhD(N), graduates will be able to achieve the following PILOs:

- PILO1: Critically evaluate advanced research methodologies and techniques, integrating innovative and evidence-based approaches to develop rigorous nursing research.
- PILO2: Generate original research that advances knowledge in a specialised area of nursing, synthesising contemporary theories and methodologies to address complex healthcare challenges.
- PILO3: Disseminate original research findings effectively through scholarly publications, conferences, and professional engagements, demonstrating advanced academic writing, critical synthesis, and scholarly discourse skills.
- PILO4: Justify and uphold ethical principles in nursing research by critically analysing complex ethical dilemmas, ensuring research integrity and responsible conduct.

PILO5: Formulate and implement innovative research strategies to address significant gaps in nursing knowledge, demonstrating intellectual leadership and methodological expertise within their chosen research domain.

4.5.2 The PhD(N) programme has an intermediate exit award leading to the qualification of a Master of Philosophy in Nursing (MPhil(N)) pitched at QF Level 6. The POs and PILOs of the MPhil(N) qualification are as follows:

MPhil(N) POs:

PO1: To develop students' ability to conduct independent and focused research in nursing, contributing to evidence-based practice.

PO2: To enhance students' research skills, including critical analysis and methodological understanding, along with the ability to communicate research findings effectively within academic and professional settings.

PO3: To equip students with foundational knowledge and skills to address ethical considerations in nursing research, ensuring awareness of responsible conduct and adherence to ethical guidelines.

PO4: To prepare students to participate in academic and professional discussions in their research area, fostering potential for leadership within the research community.

MPhil(N) PILOs:

PILO1: Critically evaluate appropriate research methodologies and techniques, applying evidence-based approaches to develop sound nursing research.

PILO2: Conduct research that contributes to knowledge in a specific area of nursing, integrating relevant theories and methodologies to address healthcare challenges.

PILO3: Effectively disseminate research findings through academic publications and presentations, demonstrating clear writing and communication skills.

PILO4: Uphold ethical principles in nursing research by analysing ethical considerations and ensuring responsible conduct.

PILO5: Develop and implement research strategies to address important gaps in nursing knowledge, demonstrating foundational methodological skills within their research area.

4.5.3 To demonstrate the alignment of learning outcomes that meet the relevant QF standard at Level 7, the Panel was provided with the following information of the Programme:

- (a) mapping of the POs and the PILOs;
- (b) mapping of the PILOs and the courses;
- (c) mapping of the courses and the Generic Level Descriptors (GLDs) at QF Level 7;
- (d) Course description forms of all courses, with information on course objectives, course intended learning outcomes (CILOs), course content, pedagogical and assessment methods, and references;
- (e) samples of teaching and learning materials and assessments; and
- (f) Internal Validation Panel (IVP) Report and the College's response to the IVP Report.

4.5.4 Relating to the market demand and positioning of the Programme, and the POs and PILOs above, the College shared with the Panel its analyses on (a) the features of the Programme, (b) the comparison between the Programme and similar programmes offered by other local institutions, and (c) the potential student demand for the Programme. Having reviewed the College's *Response to Initial Comments* and the information above including the POs and PILOs, and having discussed with the College, the Panel **advised** the College to continue to review and monitor students' achievement of POs and PILOs in alignment with the positioning of the Programme.

4.5.5 In consideration of the information above and the discussion with various stakeholders of the College, the Panel formed the view that the objectives and intended learning outcomes of the Programme meet the claimed QF standard, and are developed to address the education needs of the community.

#### 4.6 Learner Admission and Selection

*The minimum admission requirements of the learning programme must be clearly outlined for staff and prospective learners. These requirements and the learner selection processes must be effective for recruitment of learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake the programme.*

- 4.6.1 Having reviewed the College's *Response to Initial Comments* and discussed with the College in the site visit, the Panel noted the updated minimum admission requirements of the PhD(N) programme are as follows:

Minimum academic requirements:

Applicants must hold one of the following qualifications from a recognised university:

- (a) A Master of Philosophy or a taught Master's degree (with a dissertation as an award requirement) in nursing or a related health sciences discipline; or
- (b) A Bachelor's degree with first-class honours in nursing or a related health sciences discipline, with evidence of successful completion of a supervised individual research project that includes a dissertation. (Applicants must provide evidence of research achievement or experience, or their application may not be considered.); or
- (c) An equivalent qualification (in terms of QF level, QF credits and study volume, and attainment level), e.g. a relevant non-PhD doctoral degree from a recognised university.

Minimum English language proficiency requirements:

- (a) TOEFL iBT: 79; or
- (b) IELTS (Academic): 6.5; or equivalent; or
- (c) Applicants whose entry qualification from a recognised university is taught and assessed in English

- 4.6.2 Further to the above, the Panel was informed by the College that Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Programme (CELPIP) will not be accepted as an equivalent English language proficiency test/result for admission to the Programme. In addition, in relation to the minimum English language proficiency requirements in admission, as in the accreditation documents and the College's *Response to Initial Comments*, the College expressed the proposed

arrangement that applicants who do not meet the minimum English language proficiency requirements (e.g. IELTS 6.5) might be considered for admission but they are required to pass a remedial English course of the College (Academic English Advancement Course for Research Students) before taking the PhD Candidacy Examination. Having reviewed the information above and discussed with the College in the site visit meetings, the Panel considered that such arrangement is not appropriate and therefore stipulated the following pre-condition.

### **Pre-condition**

The College is to ensure that students acquire an English proficiency standard of IELTS 6.5 or equivalent prior to admission to the Programme by removing the option of using the College's Academic English Advancement Course for Research Students to meet the English proficiency requirements.

The College is to submit the relevant information and approval records to HKCAAVQ for the fulfilment of the above pre-condition on or before **31 October 2025**.

4.6.3 On student admission process and procedure, the Panel was given to understand the following process:

- (a) Subsequent to applicants' completion of applications with all required documents as stated on the College's application form, the Registry (REG) of the College will verify and vet the submitted information.
- (b) DPS is the assessment panel for the applications. DPS members, as assigned by the DPS Chair, will screen application documents and assess the quality of applicants using a screening tool considering factors such as the quality of the research proposal, prior research experience and training, academic performance, and the availability of qualified supervisors for the proposed project. The DPS Chair may also nominate other qualified supervisors with relevant expertise to review the applicants' proposals.
- (c) The DPS will shortlist applicants for an interview. The interview panel typically includes the Programme Team Leader of the PhD(N) programme, an NUR staff member capable of serving as Chief Supervisor, another NUR staff member capable of serving as Co-Supervisor, and a staff member from another School.

4.6.4 The College proposed the maximum numbers of new students per year as (a) not more than six full-time and part-time new students altogether per year and (b) the number of accumulated new and active students as 24 students (full-time and part-time altogether) in each academic year. Having reviewed and discussed with the College on the information including staffing of the Programme as well as the capacity and expertise of qualified supervisors, the Panel considered the proposed maximum numbers of new students acceptable.

#### 4.7 Programme Structure and Content

*The structure and content of the learning programme must be up-to-date, coherent, balanced and integrated to facilitate progression in order to enable learners to achieve the stated learning outcomes and to meet the programme objectives.*

4.7.1 The PhD(N) programme is a three-year full-time or four-year part-time research postgraduate programme in Nursing. The Programme comprises seven discipline courses and one advanced scholarly writing course, totaling 28 TWC credits as below.

Courses	TWC credits	QF credits
Advanced Research Methods	3	14
Leadership and Management in Nursing	3	14
Guided Study	3	14
Ethics in Clinical Research	3	14
Advanced Scholarly Writing Course for Research Students	3	14
Research Seminar	1	5
Thesis 1	6	99
Thesis 2	6	99
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>273</b>

4.7.2 Having reviewed the accreditation documents and the College's *Response to Initial Comments*, the Panel noted that there are no elective courses at this initial stage of the development of the postgraduate programmes of the College, and offering elective courses to the students of the Programme is the College's coming plan when the College develops other postgraduate programmes in future. The Panel **recommended** that the College should continue

to review and consider providing elective courses to the students of the Programme.

4.7.3 In relation to PhD candidacy and examination, the Panel noted the relevant arrangements in the course of the Programme, including the following:

- (a) Students admitted to the PhD(N) programme must attain full candidacy by successfully completing the PhD Candidacy Examination incorporated within the course *Thesis 1*. This includes fulfilling the research proposal requirement and successfully defending the proposal within the provisional period.
- (b) A PhD candidate is required to submit the final thesis that has been approved by the Chief Supervisor by the end of the study period.
- (c) A PhD candidate must take part in a viva examination which normally occurs within three months of the final thesis submission. PhD candidates must complete their coursework with a Cumulative GPA of 2.7 or above before submission of their theses for examination.
- (d) Viva results and recommendations by the Examination Panel include the following types: (i) Pass with no revision, (ii) Pass subject to minor revision, (iii) Pass subject to major revision, (iv) Pass subject to major revision and re-examination, (v) Exit with an MPhil degree, and (vi) Fail.

4.7.4 To be eligible for graduation and the award of the PhD(N), students must complete and pass all eight courses (totaling 28 TWC credits) and obtain a Graduation GPA of 2.7 or above, in addition to the PhD thesis and viva. The Panel noted that a student who is awarded the MPhil(N) qualification must satisfy the same graduation requirements of PhD(N) except that the PhD thesis is assessed by the Examination Panel as up to MPhil(N) standard rather than PhD(N) standard and “exit with an MPhil degree”.

4.7.5 In consideration of the information above and the discussion with various stakeholders of the College, the Panel considered that the structure and content of the Programme is appropriate and would enable students to achieve the stated learning outcomes and to meet the programme objectives.

#### 4.8 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

*The learning, teaching and assessment activities designed for the learning programme must be effective in delivering the programme content and assessing the attainment of the intended learning outcomes.*

- 4.8.1 The medium of instruction of the Programme is English. The Programme employs a range of teaching and learning activities, such as guided studies, meeting and discussion with supervisors, workshops, self-directed learning, lectures, seminars, tutorials, discussions. The College provided to the Panel the Course description forms of all courses, with information on course objectives, course intended learning outcomes, course content, pedagogical and assessment methods, and references. The teacher/supervisor-to-student ratios for lecture, research seminar, guided study and thesis supervision are normally 1:25, 1:25, 1:1, and 1:1 respectively.
- 4.8.2 In the accreditation documents and the College's *Response to the Initial Comments*, the College provided the Panel with information and samples of teaching, learning and assessment materials including the following courses: (a) *Leadership and Management*, (b) *Advanced Research Methods*, and (c) *Guided Study*.
- 4.8.3 In relation to students' opportunities for scholarly exchange with peers from other local and overseas institutions, having reviewed the College's *Response to Initial Comments*, the Panel was given to understand that these opportunities could possibly include (a) attending or presenting research projects at seminars and conferences, (b) participating in collaborative projects, and (c) attending summer schools and short-term programmes at local and international partner universities.
- 4.8.4 Having reviewed the information above and discussed with staff of the College in the site visit meetings, the Panel **recommended** that the College should consider providing opportunities for students to attach to laboratories, research centres or organisations for the purpose of having more research training and enhancing research exposure, research skills and teaching skills.
- 4.8.5 In terms of assessment, a range of methods are adopted in the Programme, including class participation and guided discussion, literature review, critique, research proposal, case study, data analysis, written report, workshop presentation, research

dissemination portfolio, research paper, annotated bibliography, oral and written examination.

- 4.8.6 In consideration of the information above, the Panel considered that the learning, teaching and assessment activities of the Programme are appropriate in delivering the programme content and assessing students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes.

#### 4.9 **Programme Leadership and Staffing**

*The Operator must have adequate programme leader(s), teaching/training and support staff with the qualities, competence, qualifications and experience necessary for effective programme management, i.e. planning, development, delivery and monitoring of the programme. There must be an adequate staff development scheme and activities to ensure that staff are kept updated for the quality delivery of the programme.*

- 4.9.1 The College provided the following information to the Panel to demonstrate the academic leadership and staffing for the Programme:

- (a) profiles of the management staff and teaching staff of the Programme, as well as potential supervisors/co-supervisors of PhD(N) students;
- (b) information on the academic leadership, monitoring and responsibilities of the academic staff;
- (c) minimum appointment criteria of teaching staff, as well as supervisors/co-supervisors of PhD(N) students;
- (d) CVs, expertise and recent research outcomes of teaching staff, and potential supervisors/co-supervisors; and
- (e) Staff Handbook.

- 4.9.2 The Panel noted that the College's SSR in general is set as 1:25, and there are SSRs for different types of teaching activities used by the Programme, as mentioned in paragraph 4.8.1. The Panel also noted that the maximum number of PhD students that each qualified academic staff can supervise is 6 at any given time.

- 4.9.3 Having reviewed the accreditation documents and discussed with the College in the site visit meetings, the Panel noted the minimum appointment criteria of teaching staff as well as supervisors and co-supervisors for PhD students, as also delineated in paragraphs 4.3.1 to 4.3.3. During the site visit, potential supervisors for PhD(N)

students shared with the Panel their research areas, research projects, and prospective projects/directions for PhD(N) students, as well as their current and previous student supervision experience. Having reviewed the information on the Programme's supervisors and discussed with the College in the site visit, the Panel **recommended** that the College should continue to review and monitor regularly the manpower and workload of the programme team and student supervision, consider recruiting new academic staff to take up teaching and student supervision duties if needed, and continue to train junior academic staff to take up the role of supervisor through structured training and mentoring programmes.

- 4.9.4 In consideration of the information above and the discussion with various stakeholders of the College, the Panel formed the view that the College has adequate staff with appropriate qualifications and experience to manage and teach the Programme in general.

#### 4.10 **Learning, Teaching and Enabling Resources/Services**

*The Operator must be able to provide learning, teaching and enabling resources/services that are appropriate and sufficient for the learning, teaching and assessment activities of the learning programme, regardless of location and mode of delivery.*

- 4.10.1 As delineated in Section 4.2, HKCAAVQ engaged a Financial Expert to review financial information and documents submitted by the College on its financial viability. Relevant information on the financial resources for the Programme is delineated in paragraph 4.2.4.
- 4.10.2 In terms of physical resources, the College provided to the Panel information on its learning, teaching and enabling resources relevant to the delivery of the Programme and teaching facilities. During the site visit, the College also provided the Panel with a tour of the facilities for the Programme.
- 4.10.3 The Panel was provided with summary information on library holdings, subscriptions and e-resources relevant to the Programme, including online English learning programmes, journal subscriptions and electronic databases.
- 4.10.4 Further to the above, the Panel also noted other types of resources and support that will be provided by the College to students of the Programme, including the following:

### Student Development Fund

- Student Development Fund of the College provides financial support for undergraduate students to participate in study tours, international conferences, and short-term exchange programmes. The College would extend this Fund to be also available to postgraduate students prior to the commencement of the Programme.

### Data Analysis and Software

- NUR provides students with statistical analysis software such as SPSS, SAS and R, as well as qualitative data analysis tools such as NVivo and ATLAS.ti. NUR and RO will regularly organise research seminars featuring expert speakers on various research methodologies, data analysis techniques, and the latest advancements in nursing research. Hands-on workshops will be conducted throughout the academic year, focusing on specific quantitative and qualitative data analysis tools and software. For students who need additional support when conducting research, statistical consultation with relevant scholars or statisticians will be provided by NUR.

### Psychological and Peer Support

- SAO and its counsellors offer a range of services for supporting the psychological well-being and personal growth of students, including individual and group counselling, support for students with special needs, and developmental workshops and training.
- The SAO has a Peer Mentorship Programme and will further enhance this mentorship initiative by specifically targeting postgraduate students.
- The SAO offers support services to international and mainland students, including orientation programmes and personalised guidance, to facilitate their adaptation to local and college life and enrich their overall learning experience (e.g. Non-local Students' Campus and Living Guides).

### English Enhancement Support

- The School of Arts and Humanities and the Library will organise quarterly workshops on English writing and English oral presentations for PhD students.

- The Centre for Academic and Professional Language Enhancement (CAPLE) had arranged to purchase a relevant collection of academic resources, comprising specialised teaching and learning materials and online resources dedicated to postgraduate academic writing and research-related English.
- The CAPLE will offer a series of specialised Language Support Consultations facilitated by qualified language specialists who possess doctoral degrees and substantial experience in postgraduate teaching, covering academic writing, research communication, and scholarly publication.

#### IT Support

- The ITSO offers IT support to postgraduate students and supervisors, including campus network access, learning management systems, technical assistance, ChatGPT portal services, application system support, email and communication tools, Microsoft Office/Office 365, and video recording and broadcasting. IT support services for postgraduate students are tailored to research and academic needs.

#### Library Support

- The Library is enhancing its support for postgraduate students through collaborations with faculty and database vendors, to provide bespoke workshops focused on advanced research techniques, specifically tailored to postgraduate-level studies.
- The Library will have designated staff members to facilitate postgraduate studies. Personalised research consultations will be available to postgraduate students and their supervisors, offering tailored advice and support aligned with their academic and research needs.

4.10.5 Having reviewed the information above and discussed with the College in the site visit, the Panel **recommended** that the College should continue to monitor and enhance as appropriate the resources and support to postgraduate students, especially training in qualitative and quantitative research methods and data analysis, financial support for conference and research and support for non-local students.

4.10.6 In consideration of the information above and the discussion with various stakeholders, the Panel formed the view that the provision of

learning, teaching and enabling resources is appropriate and sufficient for the Programme.

#### 4.11 Programme Approval, Review and Quality Assurance

*The Operator must monitor and review the development and performance of the learning programme on an on-going basis to ensure that the programme remains current and valid and that the learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities and learner assessments are effective to meet the programme objectives.*

4.11.1 The College provided to the Panel the following information on the on-going monitoring and review arrangements for the Programme:

- (a) Meeting minutes / extracts of AB, MB, QAC, NUR and its Postgraduate Studies Committee (before restructured as DPS);
- (b) Quality Assurance Manual;
- (c) Academic Regulations for PhD(N);
- (d) College Assessment Policy
- (e) Grading Scheme for PhD(N);
- (f) quality assurance mechanism in programme development, management and review;
- (g) mechanism on collection and follow-up of stakeholders' feedback including students, graduates, external advisors and external examiners;
- (h) Staff Handbook;
- (i) Internal Validation Report for PhD(N) (August 2024);
- (j) Template of Nomination Form for Examination Panel Member (External / Internal);
- (k) Template of Chair's Report on Thesis Examination;
- (l) Template of Examiner's Report on a Thesis for the Degree of PhD(N);
- (m) Template of Thesis Approval Report (NUR);
- (n) Template of Employer Survey on PhD(N) Graduates;
- (o) External Advisor Report on the Proposed PhD(N); and
- (p) Internal Validation Report for PhD(N) (August 2024)

4.11.2 The College's QA framework and its related mechanisms and processes such as those for developing, monitoring and reviewing programmes, as well as collection of input from internal and external stakeholders, are delineated in Section 4.4, which contains relevant recommendations and a pre-condition relating to the proper documentation of information including but not limited to the relevant manuals, guidelines, policies and regulations, such as academic

regulations and policy documents, quality assurance manual, student handbook and templates.

## **5. IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THIS ACCREDITATION REPORT**

### **5.1 Variation and withdrawal of this Accreditation Report**

5.1.1 This Accreditation Report is issued pursuant to section 5 of the AAVQO, and contains HKCAAVQ's substantive determination regarding the accreditation, including the validity period as well as any conditions and restrictions subject to which the determination is to have effect.

5.1.2 HKCAAVQ may subsequently decide to vary or withdraw this Accreditation Report if it is satisfied that any of the grounds set out in section 5 (2) of the AAVQO apply. This includes where HKCAAVQ is satisfied that the Operator is no longer competent to achieve the relevant objectives and/or the Programme no longer meets the standard to achieve the relevant objectives as claimed by the Operator (whether by reference to the Operator's failure to fulfil any conditions and/or comply with any restrictions stipulated in this Accreditation Report or otherwise) or where at any time during the validity period there has/have been substantial change(s) introduced by the Operator after HKCAAVQ has issued the accreditation report(s) to the Operator and which has/have not been approved by HKCAAVQ. Please refer to the '*Guidance Notes on Substantial Change to Accreditation Status*' in seeking approval for proposed changes. These Guidance Notes can be downloaded from the HKCAAVQ website.

5.1.3 If HKCAAVQ decides to vary or withdraw this Accreditation Report, it will give the Operator notice of such variation or withdrawal pursuant to section 5(4) of the AAVQO.

5.1.4 The accreditation status of Operator and/or Programme will lapse immediately upon the expiry of the validity period or upon the issuance of a notice of withdrawal of this Accreditation Report.

## 5.2 Appeals

- 5.2.1 If the Operator is aggrieved by the determination made in this Accreditation Report, then pursuant to Part 3 of the AAVQO the Operator has a right of appeal to the Appeal Board. Any appeal must be lodged within 30 days of the receipt of this Accreditation Report.
- 5.2.2 If the Operator is aggrieved by a decision to vary or withdraw this Accreditation Report, then pursuant to Part 3 of the AAVQO the Operator has a right of appeal to the Appeal Board. Any appeal must be lodged within 30 days of the receipt of the Notice of Withdrawal.
- 5.2.3 The Operator should be aware that a notice of variation or withdrawal of this Accreditation Report is not itself an accreditation report and the right to appeal against HKCAAVQ's substantive determination regarding accreditation arises only from this Accreditation Report.
- 5.2.4 Please refer to Cap. 592A (<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk>) for the appeal rules. Details of the appeal procedure are contained in section 13 of the AAVQO and can be accessed from the QF website at <https://www.hkqf.gov.hk>.

## 5.3 Qualifications Register

- 5.3.1 Qualifications accredited by HKCAAVQ are eligible for entry into the Qualifications Register ("QR") at <https://www.hkqr.gov.hk> for recognition under the QF. The Operator should apply separately to have their quality-assured qualifications entered into the QR.
- 5.3.2 Only learners who commence the study of the named accredited learning programme during the validity period and who have graduated with the named qualification listed in the QR will be considered to have acquired a qualification recognised under the QF.

Ref: 104/32/01

11 July 2025

JoH/CQ/DnL/dnl/cj

**Tung Wah College**

**Initial Evaluation and Learning Programme Accreditation for  
Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing**

**9, 14 - 15 April 2025**

**Panel Membership**

**Panel Chair**

**Professor Andrew DAVEY**  
Professor of Pharmacy and Director  
International (Health)  
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**\* Panel Secretary**

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**Financial Expert**

**Ms FAN Ping Wai Vickie**  
Partner  
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\* The Panel Secretary is also a member of the Accreditation Panel.



**Graduate Profile of the PhD(N) programme**

<b>Qualification Title</b>	Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing 護理學哲學博士
<b>Qualification Type</b>	Research Postgraduate Degree
<b>QF Level</b>	7
<b>Primary Area of Study and Training</b>	Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences
<b>Sub-area (Primary Area of Study and Training)</b>	Nursing
<b>Programme Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) To develop students' ability to conduct independent and rigorous research in nursing, focusing on generating new knowledge and contributing to evidence-based practice.</li><li>(2) To enhance students' research skills, including critical analysis, methodological proficiency, and the ability to effectively communicate research findings within academic and professional settings.</li><li>(3) To equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to address ethical considerations in nursing research, ensuring responsible conduct and adherence to ethical guidelines.</li><li>(4) To prepare students to engage in academic and professional discussions in their research area, fostering leadership potential within the research community.</li></ol>
<b>Programme Intended Learning Outcomes</b>	Upon completion of the PhD(N), graduates will be able to achieve the following PILOs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Critically evaluate advanced research methodologies and techniques, integrating innovative and evidence-based approaches to develop rigorous nursing research.</li><li>(2) Generate original research that advances knowledge in a specialised area of nursing, synthesising contemporary theories and methodologies to address complex healthcare challenges.</li></ol>

	<p>(3) Disseminate original research findings effectively through scholarly publications, conferences, and professional engagements, demonstrating advanced academic writing, critical synthesis, and scholarly discourse skills.</p> <p>(4) Justify and uphold ethical principles in nursing research by critically analysing complex ethical dilemmas, ensuring research integrity and responsible conduct.</p> <p>(5) Formulate and implement innovative research strategies to address significant gaps in nursing knowledge, demonstrating intellectual leadership and methodological expertise within their chosen research domain.</p>
<b>Education Pathways</b>	<p>Graduates of the programme will be eligible for admission to postdoctoral programmes offered by local or overseas universities.</p>
<b>Employment Pathways</b>	<p>Graduates of the programme will be qualified for academic roles such as Research Associate, Postdoctoral Fellow, or Assistant Professor in both UGC-funded and self-financed institutions. Additionally, they will be prepared for non-academic positions related to health policy development, public health initiatives, and health interventions in governmental and non-governmental organisations.</p>
<b>Minimum Admission Requirements</b>	<p><u>Minimum academic requirements:</u>  Applicants must hold one of the following qualifications from a recognised university:</p> <p>(a) A Master of Philosophy or a taught Master’s degree (with a dissertation as an award requirement) in nursing or a related health sciences discipline; or</p> <p>(b) A Bachelor’s degree with first-class honours in nursing or a related health sciences discipline, with evidence of successful completion of a supervised individual research project that includes a dissertation. (Applicants must provide evidence of research achievement or experience, or their application may not be considered.); or</p> <p>(c) An equivalent qualification (in terms of QF level, QF credits and study volume, and attainment level), e.g. a relevant non-PhD doctoral degree from a recognised university.</p>

	<p><u>Minimum English language proficiency requirements:</u></p> <p>(a) TOEFL iBT: 79; or</p> <p>(b) IELTS (Academic): 6.5; or equivalent; or</p> <p>(c) Applicants whose entry qualification from a recognised university is taught and assessed in English</p>
<b>Operator</b>	<p>Tung Wah College 東華學院</p>

**HKCAAVQ Report No.: 25/102**