

Written submission by City University of Hong Kong on academic freedom in universities for the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council on 12 March 2012

City University of Hong Kong (CityU) respects academic freedom, a diversity of views and rational enquiry. Each is essential for maintaining a rich and vibrant intellectual environment for students and academics if they are to discover and innovate.

Academic freedom is a core value that underpins CityU's Strategic Plan and Code of Conduct, and it is reflected in all campus activities. In the plan, under Freedom of Enquiry, we state:

“The freedom and responsibility of all faculty and students to engage in critical enquiry, intellectual discourse and academic debate is vital to the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge and the pursuit of higher truths. Within the CityU community, academic faculty should take the lead in promoting the rational debate of ideas and constructive problem-solving based on academic values and priorities.”

In addition, CityU has an established structure for upholding academic freedom on campus. Academic staff members are free to pursue any subjects that they wish to, present their findings to students, colleagues and academics, publish their results without control or censoring, and teach in a manner that they consider to be professionally acceptable. Research projects undertaken by faculty at CityU are judged by their peers, who are also academics, based on their academic merits and quality, not by other considerations. Similarly, teaching is conducted with pedagogical considerations in mind to achieve the objectives set out in the curriculum. Merit and quality are the only considerations.

The University also supports the use of the freedom of expression in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for, and dissemination of, knowledge and truth. We believe that by supporting rational dialogue, peaceful exchanges and mutual respect, we can contribute to improving the learning environment in Hong Kong and create a more diversified society.

CityU believes that the long-term interests of society are well served when the education process is integrated with the advancement of knowledge, and that the pursuit of knowledge should be as unconstrained as possible.