

Enhancing Teaching and Learning of Dissertation through Portfolio Assessment with the Application of Criterion-referenced Assessment Model (Ms. Ann Lo, BRE)

Activities carried out during the project and their impact in improving teaching and learning, where appropriate

A new Assessment Model using criterion reference assessment was proposed and implemented in 2003-2005.

- 1. Portfolio assessment with criterion-referenced assessment for Dissertation Assessment was implemented in the BRE Department in the academic years 03/04 and 04/05. The targeted students were all final year undergraduate degree students of the four undergraduate programmes (BEM, BS, CEM & RE) for both full-time and part-time modes.*
- 2. Some changes were made for setting up a proper educational management in order to guide the activities/processes of learning and teaching:*
- 3. The handbook of these programmes (Dissertation Guidance Notes) was reviewed and substantially revised for the purpose of criterion-referenced portfolio assessment in particular Dissertation. The revised Notes were to facilitate the smooth implementation of the radical changes in the Dissertation assessment practice of the department in order to address the alignment with learning outcomes and all-round attributes.*
- 4. Students are required to submit two dissertation progress reports which constituted the portfolio were substantially reviewed and revised in the area of assessment criteria. Grade descriptions were devised so as to provide references for both students and supervisors. During the formative assessment of these two reports, the supervisors will decide on whether to give grades, comments, or both, depending on their concerns and any agreements they have with the students.*
- 5. Besides, the criteria of dissertation assessment are stated in the assessment form.*
- 6. To examine and improve the constructive alignment of the teaching system, students were invited to response to the 'Opinion Survey' with its focus on the procedural process enhancing quality learning through assessment. The Learning Outcome Survey focusing on Learning Outcomes through Portfolio Assessment and Criterion-referenced Model and future improvement was also conducted at the end of the unit.*

Through the implementation and the evaluation of the new assessment model using portfolio assessment together with the criterion-referenced assessment, two most important aspects attributed to the success of the course were observed. They were the educational (course) management and achievement of learning outcomes through criterion-referenced assessment. It was clearly demonstrated that (i) a clear and good course briefing to students, (ii) clear alignment of aim/objectives/learning outcomes of the course with the assessment method(s) and (iii) close monitoring of the learning process would enhance better learning outcomes from students. Making assessment criteria explicit to students would help facilitate students' achievement of the stated learning outcomes. The use of formative assessment on research process (through portfolio assessment with assessment criteria and grade descriptions) and the summative assessment on the final dissertation (assessment form with assessment criteria and

grade descriptions), students found it easier to grasp what were intended to be learned and achieved. To conclude, the learning experiences were valuable to both students and teaching members.