

New era in lifelong learning

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With China's imminent entry to the World Trade Organization, prospects for Hong Kong is bright. As a service base for foreign investors in China, Hong Kong is set to benefit from the eventual open market of the mainland and an influx of foreign capital. Possessing a unique geographical location, a stable financial and monetary system and a transparent government, Hong Kong is in a prime position to bounce back from the Asian financial crisis.

However, China's accession to the WTO means the people of Hong Kong must be prepared for rapid reforms and changes. This will take place on many levels. Hong Kong is preparing to be Asia's business hub by introducing major infrastructure improvements, using technology to enhance public service facilities, and carrying out major social and educational reform to meet the needs of the future.

More importantly, the people of Hong Kong must adapt to the fast-changing business and social environment. Companies and individuals alike need to understand that the quality of human resources holds the key to the knowledge-based society of the future. The concept of continuing education has therefore taken flight in recent years as more people realise

that in order to stay competitive, it is imperative for Hong Kong's workforce to update their skills and knowledge on a continuing basis.

PolyU, in keeping pace with the new demands of the Hong Kong economy, has stepped up its efforts in promoting lifelong learning. The University ushered in a new era in launching in June The Hong Kong CyberU (HKCyberU), the first Hong Kong-based university in cyberspace.

HKCyberU is an advanced learning

institution on the Internet. Co-founded by PolyU and Cable & Wireless HKT, the new virtual university is an innovative set-up which can be accessed by high-speed, broadband Internet service anywhere anytime, breaking the boundaries of a traditional classroom. Using the most advanced technologies and offering unparalleled flexibility and convenience, HKCyberU is a dynamic institution that will set new standards in interactive learning.



One touch, and HKCyberU is born! Picture shows the President (left) and Mr Allen Ma, Executive Director, External Affairs and Strategic Alliance Development of Cable & Wireless HKT, at the launch of the new university.

Alliance adds new dimension to continuing education

According to **Prof. Philip Yeung Kwok-wing**, PolyU's Vice President (Academic Development) who will spearhead the future development of HKCyberU, the institution was set up in response to Hong Kong people's increasing desire to enhance their knowledge, despite their busy and hectic lifestyle.

"With our experience in continuing education, a trend is becoming very apparent," Prof. Yeung said. "People are willing to invest time to take part in continuing education, but they are often limited by their work schedules. We feel the Internet is the best medium for education because it is convenient for these busy people."

HKCyberU is the embodiment of PolyU's expertise and Cable & Wireless HKT's technical capabilities. Students studying online at HKCyberU are eligible for PolyU's academic awards. With a spectrum of programmes in niche areas, developed and delivered by PolyU faculty and enhanced by multimedia, interactive technology, HKCyberU is poised to providing rich and robust learning experience.

Initially, three fully certified postgraduate programmes can be completed through HKCyberU starting the 2000/01 academic year. "Students can obtain master's degrees in Project Management, E-commerce and Professional Accounting," Prof. Yeung said. "These courses are just as challenging and enriching as traditional academic programmes."

PolyU will undertake overall programme and courseware development and faculty administration while Cable & Wireless HKT will contribute its broadband Internet capabilities, server facilities and marketing expertise.

HKCyberU targets to support full-time working learners in Hong Kong, the Chinese mainland and the South East Asian region.



Alliance to promote lifelong learning: (from left) Prof. Philip Yeung; Mr Cheng Yiu-tong, President of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions; PolyU President; Rev. Michael Yeung of Caritas-Hong Kong; and Mr C.H. Chan, Principal of the Hong Kong College of Technology.

HKCyberU is not the only innovative step taken by PolyU to enhance lifelong learning. The University recently launched Hong Kong's first "academic network" of its kind, the Consortium of Continuing Education Institutions (CCEI). Marking a new milestone in the further advancement of lifelong education, CCEI provides a practical and alternative route for adults to receive higher education.

The Consortium is a network formed by PolyU, Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service, Hong Kong College of Technology and the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Union's Spare Time Study Centre.

Under this unprecedented approach in professional and continuing education, PolyU will consider credit transfer from CCEI member institutions to its School of Professional Education and Executive Development (SPEED) through the newly established Credit Accumulation Mechanism (CAM), a standardised credit transfer system linking the institutions together.

According to **Dr. Anthony Tam**, Director of SPEED, the CAM framework includes the introduction of a new set of Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) awards at the levels of Certificate, Diploma, Associate and Bachelor degrees.

Under the new framework, students who successfully complete CAM programmes can accumulate their credits to gain a PCE award and will be provided with the opportunity to transfer credits in conventional PolyU programmes.

Moreover, subjects offered as part of a continuing education programme by CCEI member institutions would be assessed and benchmarked for the purpose of credit transfer to PolyU's CAM system.

“As all credits are valid for a lifetime, students can pursue further studies in accordance with their own needs and at their own pace. This will strongly encourage mature learners to pursue lifelong education,” Dr. Tam said. Looking ahead, Dr. Tam is optimistic that the University’s Credit Accumulation Mechanism will be recognized by other tertiary institutions at home and abroad.

The new alliance of the four institutions will make available a more comprehensive selection of courses, offering students more choices and flexibility. Students will benefit from the concept of independent, tailor-made style of learning, and be able to study at their own pace.

At a ceremony to mark the launch of the Consortium held on PolyU campus on June 14, representatives from the CCEI institutions cheered this innovative system, which will give countless learners an added incentive to work towards higher levels of academic or professional achievement.

Rev. Michael Yeung after signing the Memorandum of Understanding on establishing CCEI.



Rev. Michael M.C. Yeung, Caritas’s Director of Education Services, said that this Consortium marked a first step to give hard working learners the recognition they deserve. He maintains that it is important for different educational institutions to work together towards the common goal of offering lifelong learning opportunities to everyone.

Between September and December this year, SPEED will offer more than 100 credit-bearing courses in a variety of subjects, including finance, accountancy, management, design, marketing, building and real estates and information technology. (For further details, see <http://www.polyu.edu.hk/speed>.)

Leveraging PolyU’s extensive links with leading academic institutions, the joint venture will also look into further partnerships with top universities and courseware providers in Asia and overseas to extend its programme offerings.

“We definitely did not want HKCyberU to be another distant learning set-up,” Prof. Yeung stressed. The online institution stresses the importance of communication between faculty and students, something Prof. Yeung feels is an important ingredient in a quality programme.

“The Internet hasn’t isolated the students from the professors; it has actually brought them closer together,” he added. A survey conducted among PolyU faculty revealed that class discussions and questioning sessions has been kept to a minimum in a traditional classroom setting for various reasons. “Students in Hong Kong are generally too shy to ask questions or raise discussions,” Prof. Yeung said. However, the Internet has changed all these.

“We have real-time discussion chat rooms and bulletin boards for each course,” he continued. “Students have expressed a very positive response in voicing their questions, and this has actually enhanced the relationship between mentors and students.” In fact, students are partially judged by their degree of “class” participation. “This is by no means an isolated course of study. HKCyberU is enabling the students to access the classroom anywhere, anytime.”

Prof. Yeung feels that HKCyberU offers an alternative to pursuing a degree, but does not believe the Internet classroom will replace traditional campus life. “The online studies really cater for working people who, due to the demand of their jobs, cannot attend classes at a set time,” he said. “University life is much more than just coursework: it is about socialising, experiencing life on campus; Internet education is an added dimension.”

Since its launch, HKCyberU has received great support from students and faculty alike. “Our instructors are very interested in developing new ideas,” Prof. Yeung said. “Our society is going through enormous changes. We must adapt to a new lifestyle, and that includes reforms in education.”

PolyU’s new Vice President (Partnership and Continuing Education), **Dr Lui Sun-wing**, shared the view that continuing education in Hong Kong is changing fast, saying that PolyU has always adopted a practical and flexible approach, providing a multi-faceted educational environment for Hong Kong people. “Our goal is to give students what they need to succeed in the world today,” Dr Lui said. “Our speciality is knowledge enhancement; we enable each student to succeed in their chosen field and keep them abreast of the ever-changing society.”

Dr Lui feels that students do not get an education for a piece of paper; they see education as a means to make them more competitive. “Our students are serious about learning. They know exactly what they need and it is our job to provide them with the knowledge,” he said.

After all, the world is getting smaller, and for Hong Kong to earn its deserving place in the world economy, knowledge enhancement is of paramount importance. And PolyU will continue to do whatever it takes to give the people of Hong Kong the “edge”. (For more information on HKCyberU, log on to <http://www.polyu.edu.hk/hkcyberu>.)

終身學習新紀元



理大與香港電訊攜手創辦了香港首家網上大學——「香港網上學府」，標誌着終身學習已步入新紀元。



隨着中國預期即將加入世界貿易組織，香港以其獨特的地理位置、穩定的金融制度及高度透明的政府，前景將更形樂觀。但與此同時，港人必須準備迎接中國入世將帶來各種急速的改革和轉變。

面對瞬息萬變的商業和社會環境，工商企業和個人都需要明白，人力資源的素質對我們邁向未來以知識為本的經濟，是極為重要的。故此，持續教育的概念近年來亦愈來愈普及。大家都意識到，香港如要保持競爭力，港人必須與時並進，不斷學習新的技能和知識。

香港理工大學為配合本港經濟發展，近年已積極加強推動終身學習，更於六月初與香港電訊攜手創辦了香港首家網上大學——「香港網上學府」。

這所嶄新的虛擬大學為互聯網上的高等教育學府，學員可利用高速的寬頻互聯網服務，隨時隨地打破傳統教室的界限，在網上進行學習。透過使用最先進的科技，這所活力澎湃的網上學府將為學員提供更多方便，並為互動學習奠定新標準。

負責新學府發展工作的理大副校長（學術發展）楊國榮教授表示，鑑於愈來愈多港人在百忙中，仍然希望抽空進修，故此香港網上學府便應運而生。楊教授稱：「以我們在持續教育方面的經驗看來，這個趨勢已十分明顯。在職人士雖然樂意投資時間於持續教育上，但他們往往受到工作時間所限。我認為對繁忙的在職人士來

說，互聯網是最佳的教育媒介；他們透過上網，便可獲取所需知識。」

香港網上學府結合了理大的專長，以及香港電訊在技術方面的優勢，學員成功修畢網上學府的課程可獲理大頒授學銜。學府透過利用多媒體及互動科技，為學員提供一系列由理大學系教員設計、編寫及教授的課程，讓他們體驗適切他們需要的互動學習經驗。

香港網上學府將先於下學年開辦三項授課式深造課程，並會陸續加開其他課

程。楊教授說：「修畢有關課程的學員可獲得項目管理碩士、電子商貿碩士或專業會計碩士學位。這些課程的內容和傳統的學術課程同樣豐富和具挑戰性。」

理大將負責新學府的行政工作，提供師資，以及統籌各項課程的教材編寫及發展；香港電訊將提供有關的寬頻互聯網技術、伺服器設施及市務推廣資源。

香港網上學府的課程主要為香港、中國內地及東南亞地區的在職人士而設。憑著理大在教育界所建立的廣泛合作關係，



香港電訊的馬錦星先生(中)表示該公司感到非常榮幸能與理大合作開創網上專上教育的新一頁。

持續教育院校聯盟 推動終身學習

為推動終身學習，理大除了創辦香港網上學府外，最近更籌組了持續教育院校聯盟，創同類型教學機構聯盟先河。聯盟標誌着終身教育發展的新里程，為在職人士提供另一個接受高等教育的可行途徑。

聯盟由理大、香港明愛成人及高等教育服務、香港專業進修學校及香港工會聯合會業餘進修中心組成。

在這個創新的專業及持續教育架構下，理大會透過新制訂的學分累積制，對成員機構開辦的課程進行評估。若有關課程符合大學要求，理大將給予學分。

理大專業進修學院總監**譚展雲**博士表示，在學分累積制下，學員可根據一個循序漸進及清晰的進修階梯累積學分，在不同階段獲取理大專業進修學院頒授的證書、文憑、副學士及學士等資格。學員在完成聯盟成員承認的學分課程後，可以將學分轉移到理大的專業進修學院繼續進修。



譚展雲博士

譚博士續稱：「學分是可以終身累積的，學員可以根據自己的能力、興趣、家庭或工作的需要調節自己的學習進度，而毋須擔心已累積的學分會失效。我們希望進修人士可以因此受惠。」譚博士並有信心外國及本地大學會承認理大專業進修學院學分累積制下開辦的各項課程，讓進修人士可更有彈性地選擇繼續升學的途徑。

四所院校的聯盟為學員提供較全面的課程、較多的選擇和較大的靈活性。學員可以因應個人需要，自行訂定學習進度。

聯盟的成立典禮於六月十四日假理大校園舉行，由聯盟成員機構代表簽署合作備忘錄。新聯盟可鼓勵更多在職人士投入進修行列，以獲取更高的學術及專業成就。

香港明愛教育服務部長**楊鳴章**神父稱，聯盟的成立是邁出了第一步，讓孜孜不倦進修的人，他們辛苦得來的學習成果能獲得認同。他又期望其他專上院校和辦學團體，積極響應，共同努力，為更多港人提供終身教育機會。

在今年九月至年底，理大專業進修學院將開辦超過一百項學分課程。課程範圍包括金融、會計、管理、設計、市場學、建築、房地產及資訊科技。（詳情請瀏覽網頁 <http://www.polyu.edu.hk/speed>）



楊國榮教授

新學府將考慮稍後與亞洲區內及海外其他大學及課程供應機構合作，提供更廣泛的課程選擇。

楊教授強調，網上學府不是要成為一所提供遙距學習課程的學院。新學府將非常注重教員與學員之間的溝通，楊教授認為這是高素質課程中必備的重要元素。

楊教授續稱：「互聯網並沒有把學員和教員分隔開來，實際上，互聯網

把兩者拉得更近。」一項以理大教員為對象的調查顯示，在傳統的課堂中，由於種種原因，討論和發問環節的時間往往會被減至較少。楊教授說香港的學生一般來說，都會因為害羞而少發問及參與討論，但互聯網卻可補救這方面的問題。

楊教授說：「網上學府每項課程均設有實時的討論室及佈告版。學員非常踴躍發問，而這亦加強了教員與學員之間的關係。」

楊教授認為，香港網上學府提供修讀學位課程的另類選擇，但並不贊同網上教室可以取代傳統校園生活。他說：「網上學習方便一些由於工作關係，未能在特定時間上課的在職人士，能夠繼續進修。但大學生活並不單只是唸書，還包括社交生活和體驗校園生活；網上教育應是一個新加的層面。」

網上學府自推出以來，已獲學員和教員大力支持。楊教授稱：「我們的教員非常有興趣開發新意念。我們的社會現正經歷巨大的轉變。我們須適應各種新的生活方式，而這包括教育方面的改革。」

剛獲委任不久的理大副校長（產學合作及持續教育）**呂新榮**博士亦持有相近看法。他表示理大一向以務實及靈活的態度致力為香港市民提供多元化的教育。呂博士稱：「我們的目標，是讓學員可學習到知識和技能，讓他們能在現今社會學有所成。我們的專長是增進知識，我們幫助每個學生於其專業內爭取成功，並且與時並進。」

呂博士認為學生求學的目的，並不只是要獲得一紙文憑。他們視教育為加強本身競爭力的途徑。他說：「我們的學生非常認真學習。他們確切知道自己需要甚麼，而我們的工作就是傳授他們渴求的知識。」

世界已變得愈來愈小。香港如要在世界經濟中佔一席位，港人就必須不斷學習新知識，而理大亦會繼續努力，以求加強香港人的競爭優勢。（有關香港網上學府詳情，可瀏覽網頁 <http://www.polyu.edu.hk/hkcyberu>）