

# **Policy Guidelines for Projects Supported by the Learning and Teaching Committee or OBA Funding<sup>\*</sup>**

The quality and progress of learning and teaching development projects supported by the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) or the OBA Funding are monitored by the Departmental/School Learning and Teaching Committees (D/SLTCs) and the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees (FLTCs). The following sets out the guidelines for the implementation and monitoring of these projects.

## **1. Guidelines on Project Implementation and Monitoring**

### **1.1 Project Commencement and Setting Up of Project Account**

Projects should commence and be completed according to the schedule as stated in the Project Proposal, unless otherwise advised by the funding authority (for example, if the date of funding allocation is much later than the proposed commencement date, the project completion date may be rescheduled taking the funding date as the actual commencement date.)

If for any reason a project starts later than the proposed commencement date/funding allocation date, the Project Leader (PL) should inform D/SLTC as soon as possible and seek its endorsement by providing valid reasons for the delay. Once endorsement is granted, the D/SLTC Secretary concerned should inform the LTC/WGOBE Secretary<sup>#</sup> of the new project commencement and completion dates for records updating purposes.

After funding support to a project proposal has been approved, a Funding Acceptance Form will be sent to the PL for him/her to indicate whether he/she would accept the funding and related conditions. Upon receipt of this form, the LTC/WGOBE Secretary will request the Finance Office (FO) to set up an account for the project. FO will inform PL of the account code after the account has been set up.

Only full-time staff members of PolyU who have a well-defined role in teaching or in enhancing teaching and learning of the University are eligible to be PLs. In the event of any change of project leadership after proposal endorsement or project commencement, the PL should seek approval from the D/SLTC of his/her Department/School.

### **1.2 Extension of Project Completion Date**

PL is strongly advised to adhere to the planned schedule. Applications for extension of project period (Form 19) should be submitted to D/SLTC at least 3 months before the scheduled completion date with an up-to-date progress report. Extension of project period would only be considered by D/SLTC for well-justified reasons under special circumstances.

In special cases where the funding authority has imposed a deadline for using up the funds, applications for extension beyond the deadline should be approved by both D/SLTC as well as the funding authority. Such requests will normally NOT be approved unless there are very strong reasons.

### **1.3 Virement of Funds Within Project**

PL has the authority to transfer up to 20% of the total budget between budget items of the same

<sup>\*</sup> OBA Funding: Funding for Promoting Outcome-Based Approaches to Student Learning

<sup>#</sup> WGOBE: Working Group on Outcome-Based Education

project that have been approved.

For virement of funds above 20% between budget items of the same project, prior approval must be obtained from D/SLTC.

To apply for the transfer of funds, PL needs to fill in Form 18a (Application for Virement of Project Funds – for virement of amount within 20% of total budget) or Form 18b (for virement of amount above 20% of total budget) and send it to the relevant party/parties for action or approval.

#### **1.4 Records of Expenditure**

PL has to account for all the grant money already spent on the project with receipts and/or payment vouchers, which may have to be submitted for checking on request. The funding authority reserves the right to recover from the PL any grant money which has been improperly spent.

PL is fully responsible for keeping the project's expenditure within the approved budget. There will NOT be any additional provision for any overspending; PL has to make good any deficit with funding from other sources with permission.

FO will send monthly finance statements to PL for his/her information/record.

#### **1.5 Changes to Project's Original Proposal, including Changes in the Pattern of Expenditure**

If for any reasons PL wishes to introduce changes to the project's original proposal, including the pattern of expenditure, he/she should submit the request with justifications to D/SLTC for approval.

#### **1.6 Code of Practice for Learning and Teaching Development Projects Involving Human Subjects**

PL is required by the University's Human Subjects Ethics Sub-committee to observe the Code of Practice for Research/Teaching Projects Involving Human Subjects as well as the relevant guidelines and procedures, if applicable. Please refer to the Staff Handbook ([https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/Staff/staff\\_handbook/](https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/Staff/staff_handbook/))

#### **1.7 Intellectual Property Rights Including Copyright**

It is important for PL to understand and follow the University's Policy on Intellectual Property Rights including Copyright. All intellectual property created by PL during his/her employment with the University is normally owned exclusively by the University.

PL should also avoid infringement of copyright when dealing with learning resources involved in his/her project. For details of rules about intellectual property and copyright, please refer to the Staff Handbook ([https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/Staff/staff\\_handbook/](https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/Staff/staff_handbook/)) as well as the Copyright Ordinance of the HKSAR (<http://www.ipd.gov.hk/eng/copyright.htm>).

#### **1.8 Submission of Progress/Completion Reports**

PL is required to submit an annual Progress Report (Form 13) by **30 June each year**, or at a time as required by the funding authority, to FLTC via DLTC. (If PL has applied to extend the project completion date within January – May of the year, and has submitted a progress report as

supporting document, there is no need for him/her to submit another one in June, unless he/she wishes to provide further details about progress made within the period or if DLTC considers it necessary.)

DLTC and FLTC will rate and comment on the project progress and quality, and inform PL of the comments. If there is any area rated as 'needing attention', PL is required to provide a response to the comments and a follow-up plan by completing the relevant section of the Report Form and submit it to FLTC via DLTC as soon as possible after the receipt of the comments so as to allow FLTC adequate time to include the reporting of the follow-up plan in its Annual Report to LTC/WGOBE by 31 August (see Sub-section 1.10 below). (For progress reports submitted between January and May of the year as documents to support PL's application for project period extension, D/SLTC should ensure that such reports also undergo the annual evaluation process.)

When the project is completed, PL must submit a Completion Report (Form 12) to FLTC via DLTC **within 3 months of the completion date**, or within a period as required by the funding authority. The evaluation procedures for Completion Reports are the same as those for Progress Reports.

(In the case of independent Schools [School of Design and School of Hospitality and Tourism Management], the reports [or the responses and follow-up plans of projects with areas rated as 'needing attention' by SLTC and/or Dean of School] should be submitted to the Dean of School via SLTC.)

Copies of the Progress and Completion Reports will be attached to the F/SLTC Annual Reports to LTC/WGOBE as supporting documents (see Sub-section 1.10 below).

Special requests such as virement of funds or extension of project completion date should not be included in progress or completion reports. They should be submitted separately to the relevant approval authorities following proper procedures (see Sub-sections 1.2 and 1.3 above).

## **1.9 Evaluation of Progress and Quality of Projects by D/SLTC and FLTC/Dean of School**

D/SLTC and FLTC/Dean of School have the responsibility to ensure the progress and quality of projects by regular monitoring (e.g., via Progress Reports) and by providing constructive comments, recommendations and facilitation to PL where appropriate.

D/SLTC will give a detailed evaluation of a project by completing the evaluation section of the progress/completion report before the report is sent to FLTC for comments and endorsement. For Faculty-Wide/Cross Department projects, the evaluation will be completed by the FLTC of the host department. (In the case of independent Schools, the reports should be submitted to the Dean of School for evaluation.)

D/SLTC and FLTC/Dean of School will also evaluate a project in terms of its financial management, based on the annual summary of financial statements of the project accounts from the Finance Office.

For centres/units/offices (e.g., EDC and SAO) which do not have a DLTC and/or do not belong to a Faculty, the progress and quality of projects undertaken by staff members of the centre/unit/office should be evaluated by the Head of Centre/Unit/Office or by the funding authority if PL is also the Head of Centre/Unit/Office.

When evaluation has been completed, the comments of FLTC and DLTC (or the Head of Centre/Unit/Office) will be conveyed back to PL via DLTC (or directly by the Head of Centre/Unit/Office). (In the case of independent Schools, the comments of the Dean of School and SLTC will be conveyed back to PL via SLTC.)

If D/SLTC and/or FLTC/Dean of School (or the Head of Centre/Unit/Office) has rated a project as 'needing attention', the rating and comments should be conveyed back to the PL concerned as soon as possible via D/SLTC (or by the Head of Centre/Unit/Office concerned), to allow the PL adequate time to submit his/her follow-up plan to FLTC/Dean of School via D/SLTC (or to the Head of Centre/Unit/Office) for reporting in F/SLTC's (or the Centre/Unit/Office's) Annual Report to LTC/WGOBE by 31 August.

#### **1.10 F/SLTC's Annual Report to LTC/WGOBE**

The F/SLTC Chairperson (or the Head of Centre/Unit/Office) will submit an Annual Report (Form 20) on the progress and quality of the projects within the Faculty/School (or Centre/Unit/Office) to LTC/WGOBE by **31 August each year**. Copies of the Progress and/or Completion Reports of the projects reported on should be attached to the Annual Report as supporting documents.

#### **1.11 Project Completion and Closing of Project Account**

**Requests for purchases of equipment or services after the project's scheduled completion date is not allowed.** When informed of receipt of project completion report by D/SLTC, the LTC/WGOBE Secretary will instruct FO to close the project account. PL should ensure that any expenditure arising from the project would have been settled before the account is closed. Any unspent grants in the project account at the time of closing will be returned to the funding source.

However, in case there are still outstanding claims on the project upon project completion, the project account can be kept open for up to 6 months in order to clear the payments. If a longer period is required for clearing any outstanding claims, PL has to submit a request to the funding authority, via D/SLTC, within the 6-month period for a further extension with valid reasons. Such requests will normally NOT be approved by the funding authority unless there are very strong reasons.

When a project is completed, all the equipment, software, unused consumable items, publications and documents that were purchased for use would become the property of the funding authority. Though permission for the continued use of the purchased items in the 'host' department will normally be given, the funding authority reserves the right to recall and redistribute the items for the use of other projects as and when necessary.

#### **1.12 Inactive Projects**

To ensure that projects are in good progress, project funds will be automatically clawed back if a project has been found financially inactive for 6 months, and the PL is required to submit an up-to-date progress report to D/SLTC and FLTC.

#### **1.13 Dissemination and Sharing of Project Findings/Deliverables**

As a grant recipient, the PL has the obligation to disseminate the findings of the project, and share with other colleagues and/or departments the deliverables and/or experience gained, via activities organized by the funding authority, FLTC, D/SLTC and/or any other relevant units.

Any output arising from the project such as publications, CD-ROMs, videos, etc., should be given due acknowledgement to the effect that the work has been supported wholly or partly by the grants.

## **1.14 Project Withdrawal or Change in Project Leadership**

Should the PL subsequently decide to withdraw the project after commencement, he/she has to notify D/SLTC in writing, accompanied by an up-to-date progress report. Any unspent money of the grant will be returned to the funding authority. PL has to account for all the grant money already spent on the project with detailed receipts and payment vouchers, and to return all the assets acquired to the 'host' department. The funding authority reserves the right to recover from PL any grant money which has been improperly spent.

If there is a change in project leadership, the endorsement of the D/SLTC Chair of the change has to be obtained. The D/SLTC Secretary of the department concerned has to inform the LTC/WGOBE Secretary as soon as possible for amendment of project records.

## **1.15 Online Projects Management System (PMS)**

The Online Projects Management System (PMS) (<https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/edc/ltpms/>) enables the access of relevant project information/documents by Project Leaders, D/S/FLTC Chairpersons and Secretaries, as well as delegated persons within the Department/Faculty. The above eligible persons can login the system by using their PolyU NetIDs and passwords. D/S/FLTC Secretaries should inform the LTC/WGOBE Secretary of any change of delegated persons in accessing the system.

D/SLTC Secretaries and/or their delegates are responsible for uploading projects' key documents to the system in a timely manner.

## **2. Guidelines on Appointment of Project Personnel**

### **2.1 Appointment Procedures**

PL who is going to appoint project personnel should follow the proper procedures as stated in the LTC/OBE website (LTC: [http://ltc.polyu.edu.hk/Employ\\_procedures.html](http://ltc.polyu.edu.hk/Employ_procedures.html)) (OBE: <http://www.polyu.edu.hk/obe/>).

### **2.2 Duties**

The duties of project supporting staff should only be associated with the project concerned; he/she should not be required to assist in the PL's own programme of higher degree studies or those of the co-investigator(s).

Project supporting staff may be required to carry out departmental duties up to a maximum of 6 hours per week as assigned by the Head of Department in consultation with the PL.

### **2.3 Rank of Appointment**

The appointment of project personnel should be at the rank as approved by the funding authority. Any change to the approved rank requires prior approval from D/SLTC with well-justified reasons.

Appointments will normally start at the first point of the relevant salary scale. Appointees may be offered increments within the approved budget for relevant experience and/or academic achievement or project work in excess of the minimum required for appointment, with prior approval from D/SLTC.

## 2.4 Salaries and Conditions of Service

PL is advised to take into consideration the leave payment, mandatory provident fund (MPF) and severance pay, if any, of the project personnel prior to their appointment. Remuneration for project personnel should be made within the range of salaries for each rank. PL may propose a salary increase within the salary range for the appropriate staff rank for their project personnel on grounds of good/outstanding performance upon their completion of a period of service, for the approval of D/SLTC. As the salaries of project personnel are not drawn up with reference to the Master Pay Scale (MPS), there will be NO automatic increments or automatic cost of living adjustment whenever there is a revision in the MPS.

Temporary full-time project personnel are not eligible for other benefits except those mentioned in the Letter of Appointment and those in accordance with the Employment Ordinance. As the terms and conditions may change from time to time, the PL is advised to check with the Human Resources Office (HRO) and inform the proposed appointees before appointments are made.

## 3. Guidelines on Purchasing Procedure

PL should follow the purchasing policies and procedures promulgated by FO for any purchasing of approved items, including services. In case there is a need to make any changes to the specifications indicated in the project proposal, or to acquire software which is already available on the network, full justification for such requests will need to be provided to D/SLTC.

### Note:

- (a) **In any applications mentioned above that require D/SLTC's approval, approval from FLTC/ Dean of School is needed if the Chairperson of D/SLTC is also the PL.**
- (b) **For centres/units/offices which do not have a DLTC and/or do not belong to a Faculty, applications/reports that require the approval/endorsement of DLTC and/or FLTC should be approved by the Head of Centre/Unit/Office, or approved/endorsed by the funding authority if the PL is also the Head of Centre/Unit/Office.**

May 2011