Implementation of Programme Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
for Taught Postgraduate Programmes

1 Background

1.1 PolyU introduced a two-tier Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan (LOAP) for undergraduate degree programme in 2008 as part of the implementation of outcome-based education (OBE). Departments were required to maintain and implement a programme learning outcomes assessment plan (P-LOAP) for each of their programmes, collect outcome data at programme and subject levels, and report the results and action plans for improvement in their departmental annual QA reports (now in the Annual Operation Plan). Until now, this requirement has not been extended to taught postgraduate programmes.

1.2 In view of the importance of P-LOAP to facilitating evidence-based improvement of student learning, the University has decided to extend the implementation of P-LOAP to taught postgraduate programmes. This is timely both in terms of institutional readiness as considerable experience with learning outcomes assessment has been accumulated in department level, and in terms of global trends in higher education as evident by the increased emphasis on student learning outcomes by accreditation bodies. This will also meet the expectation of the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) for assessment of outcomes of taught postgraduate programmes in the upcoming quality audit.

1.3 This document presents the guidelines and schedule for implementing P-LOAP for taught postgraduate programmes.

2 Implementation guidelines

2.1 With the decision to extend the implementation of P-LOAP, departments are required to do the following for their taught postgraduate programmes if they have not already done so:

A. Revise their programmes using an outcome-based approach	
A1 Articulate clearly the intended programme learning outcomes with reference to the institutional learning outcomes for taught postgraduate programmes (see the link on the right) and other relevant sources, and indicate their relation with the institutional learning outcomes for taught postgraduate programmes.	**References** Learning Outcomes for PolyU Graduates of Taught Postgraduate Programmes: Policy and Guidelines http://www.polyu.edu.hk/obe/institutional_policies/Learning_Outcomes_for_PolyU_Graduates_of_Taught_Postgraduate.pdf
A2 Ensure that the programme learning outcomes are adequately addressed by the constituent subjects of the programme through curriculum mapping.	

A3	Make sure that suitable teaching and assessment methods are being adopted at subject level and properly presented in the subject description using Form AS140. NOTE: All of the above should manifest in the Definitive Programme Document (DPD). For specific requirements for programme learning outcomes, curriculum mapping and subject description in DPD, please refer to the 'Guidelines and Regulation for Programme Planning, Validation and Management'.	OBE website: http://www.polyu.edu.hk/obe/08_Guide_to_OBE.php Guidelines and Regulations for Programme Planning, Validation and Management (Section C4, 2.1 & Form AS140) https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/as/Staff/VAL/

B. Develop a P-LOAP for each of their programmes

B1	Develop a P-LOAP: choose appropriate outcomes assessment methods and measures, decide how the data will be collected, establish the criteria for success, describe how the results will be disseminated and used to improve learning, and develop an implementation schedule.	**References** Developing a Programme Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan: A Simple and Practical Guide for PolyU Staff http://www.polyu.edu.hk/obe/08_4_Developing_a_Programme_Learning_Outcomes_Assessment_Plan.php
B2	Submit the P-LOAP to Faculty Board for endorsement.	

C. Implement the P-LOAP

C1	Assess student learning outcomes according to the P-LOAP and use the findings to inform improvement actions.	**References** Handbook on PolyU's Quality Assurance Framework, Mechanisms and Processes for Academic Department (Appendix A, Form LOA-1) https://www2.polyu.edu.hk/qacad/
C2	Report programme learning outcome assessment results (using Form LOA-1) and discuss action plans for improvement in the annual review of each academic programme as are required for the Annual Operation Plan.	
C3	Submit an interim report on the progress of implementation of P-LOAP at taught postgraduate level to the University in August 2015.	

2.2   Departments already implementing P-LOAPs for their taught postgraduate programmes should check to confirm that their current practice is consistent with the guidelines presented above, and make rectifications if necessary.

3   Implementation timeline

3.1   All taught postgraduate programmes offered locally should have their P-LOAPs in place for implementation by August 2014. Offshore taught postgraduate programmes should get theirs ready by August 2015.

3.2   The table below presents the timeline for reaching the milestones leading up to the across-the-board implementation of P-LOAP for taught postgraduate programmes. Departments should attempt to proceed through the stages as quickly as practicable and complete each stage before the designated deadline.

Milestones	Local programmes	Offshore programmes
• Revision of programmes for adopting an outcome-based approach (Section 2.1A refers; skip if done) • Development of P-LOAP for each programme (Section 2.1B refers; skip if done)	Starting Now	Starting Now
Endorsement of the DPDs (if revised) and P-LOAPs (if new or revised) for implementation by relevant Faculty/School Boards	Latest by Aug 2014	Latest by Aug 2015
Implementation of P-LOAP (Section 2.1-C1 refers)	Starting 2014/15	Starting 2015/16
Reporting of learning outcomes assessment results in the Annual Operation Plan (AOP)	Starting Nov 2015	Starting Nov 2016

3.3   Departments already implementing P-LOAPs for their taught postgraduate programmes may continue the implementation unimpeded, but should check to confirm that their current practice is consistent with the requirements.

3.4   Overall progress will be monitored by the Working Group on Outcome-Based Education (WGOBE). **All departments will be requested to submit an interim report on the implementation of P-LOAP for taught postgraduate programmes in August 2015.** Other informal reporting of progress may be requested if necessary.