People commonly regard spring as a good time to reflect and plan. For OGUR, summertime is another opportunity to reflect on our work and plan for the new academic year. In this issue, I would like to share with you the diversity of OGUR’s duties, and the exciting work and plans OGUR has.

One may not immediately relate academic integrity to academic advising or administration of GUR subjects. Part of OGUR’s service is to host and maintain the Online Tutorial of Academic Integrity, which is a required component of the Freshman Seminar. Since 2016, OGUR has been working on tasks related to academic integrity, including administering two online courses for over 10,000 students (undergraduates and some postgraduates), assisting the annual implementation of academic integrity, handling enquiries from staff and students, and preparing related publications. The collaborative effort of our team helps ensure students are well aware of academic integrity and reinforces the university’s core values of honesty and ethical academic work in students. I invite you to learn more about our work in this area.

Reflecting on our service, some of us shared on working for academic advising and GUR administration and their positive mindsets in doing their work, and thus contributing to the University.

2018/19 has been a fruitful year for OGUR. We stepped up to promote academic advising through many new innovative activities and promotion materials. In 2019/20, we are committed to keeping up with this work and capacity building in academic advising.

Dr Zenobia Chan
Overview of the Functions of OGUR

There are two main functions:

1. Capacity Building in Academic Advising

To maximise the contribution of OGUR & Faculties/Departments to students’ success across different roles

- Training workshops for Academic Advisors
- Community of Practice - Academic Advising
- Review of Academic Advising Plans and Reports
- Thank You Campaigns for Academic Advisors/Academic Counsellors, Undergraduate Secretaries and Administrative staff
- Academic Advising Staff Handbook
- eLearning course and training videos for staff
- Briefing/ Sharing sessions for Undergraduate Secretaries
- Advising service for students
- Academic Advising Student Handbook
- Publications on GUR and academic advising
- GUR, Study skills and Self-management workshops
- Presentations in Welcoming Days and Joint-briefing with Academic Registry
- eAdvising course for students
- Student Ambassador Scheme

2. Administration of General University Requirements

- Assistance to Committee on General University Requirements (CoGUR)
- Administration of GUR Subjects
- Credit Transfer of GUR Subjects
- Documents and statistics for CoGUR
- Adjustment and analysis of CAR offering quota
- Monitoring of CAR subject enrolment and subject enrolment count of CAR and SL
- CAR subject projection, proposals, subject updates, and master records
- Healthy Lifestyle Programme
- Online Tutorial of Academic Integrity (A required component in Freshman Seminar)
- Credit transfer applications and records
- Credit transfer guidelines
WORKING AT OGUR

Sharing from staff on the development of Academic Advising and GUR

Since its establishment in 2012, OGUR has been instrumental in the smooth implementation of General University Requirements and academic advising. In this issue, a few of us would like to share our thoughts on the development of the Office and our work.

This is my 8th year working at OGUR. It has been a great pleasure to work for and grow together with the office since its establishment in 2012.

Looking back over the years working at OGUR, I have seen the office developing from a young team into a mature and structured office, handling various important tasks related to our students. Personally, having had numerous opportunities to handle a broad spectrum of work, from advising students to office management and administration, and staff supervision means more than my professional development. It has also been an exciting and rewarding journey to engage actively in the development of our students and the University. As the students make plans to achieve their various personal, academic and professional goals, I have taken inspiration from them to continue to reflect and search for development opportunities in my work.

OGUR strives for continuous development in the scope and capacity of our service. Over the years, the Office has reached out to students of different backgrounds, enhanced and diversified our training workshops and activities for students, staff and the university community. Apart from advising service, the other major function of the Office, the administration of the GUR, is to take steps to ensure the GUR is smoothly implemented every semester. Last year the Office also introduced many new initiatives to promote academic advising at PolyU. There are new changes every year—changes that make a positive difference to both the university community and my work life in PolyU.

I have been serving OGUR for more than three years. I have the privilege of cooperating with all Faculties/Departments on the arrangement of planning and offering Cluster Area Requirements (CAR) subjects for approximately 16,500 undergraduate students, including higher diploma, senior year, articulation degree and 4-year undergraduate students. Also serving as the liaison officer, I have the opportunity to liaise with other departments and functional offices. This exposure to different aspects of the operations of PolyU is invaluable.

Apart from my operational duties, I supervise my team in the General Office (GO) for the office operation and GUR administration. I have learned management skills and utilised the individual talents of my team to ensure efficient and effective operation. One of my goals is to strengthen my team’s performance and provide guidance to them when they face any difficulties or challenges. I also encourage them to share their recommendations for improvement of work tasks.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the Assistant Secretary to the Committee on General University Requirements (CoGUR) to provide support to the Secretary of CoGUR for CAR subject issues, including quality assurance of GUR subjects. It is my pleasure to support the implementation of GUR for all undergraduate students.
As a PolyU graduate, I am honoured to have the opportunity to serve and contribute to my alma mater by being a staff member. My work in OGUR involves working with various types and amounts of data. One of my major duties is to handle the data of around 250 Cluster Area Requirements (CAR) subjects, allowing over 15,000 students to progress and complete this part of GUR each year.

This rapidly growing Big Data comes with opportunities as well as challenges, such as data security, data accuracy and quality assurance. To deal with these challenges, my first step is to study the data. I then try to develop appropriate strategies and make recommendations to management for the organisation, protection, storage and retrieval of data. I consider this hard work and dedication to big data handling and processing to be worthwhile. I find meaning and professionalism in my work.

I continue to grow with the University professionally and personally. I am pursuing a postgraduate degree in computing at PolyU to build knowledge and skills for my professional development.

General University Requirements (GUR) has been an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum since 2012. I would like to share a short review of the literature on the advantages of general education subjects in undergraduate programmes.

General education contains a wide range of fields and subjects, allowing students to have a touch of everything (Wang, 2016). Including general education courses and programmes in undergraduate curriculum has been a trend in the tertiary education system worldwide in recent years. General education has been considered necessary for students’ whole education (Aldegether, 2017) and students’ broad understanding of everything related to life (Herbst, 2004).

Tompkins (1945)’s report on the Harvard Committee Report states that natural science, social studies and humanities are common areas of general education courses. These three areas can eventually develop students’ abilities to think and communicate their thoughts effectively, to make relevant judgments and to distinguish among values. These abilities increase students’ competitiveness both at school and later in society. Carmichael, Dellner and Szostak (2017) assert that students can gain self-efficacy during general education classes when students can contribute from their own life or study experience to interdisciplinary conversations. Students who study under a holistic education curriculum are definitely better potential employees in employers’ eyes (Bear & Skorton, 2019). A three-year longitudinal study conducted in Hong Kong also shows general education brings positive impact and development to students’ collaborative learning competence, problem-solving, critical thinking, lifelong learning competence and ethical leadership (Shek, Yu & Zhu, 2018).

As a graduate of PolyU who studied GUR, I had to say it was an interesting journey to study topics outside of my major. I got to know students from other disciplines and learned from them. Also, GUR have enhanced my empathy towards people in society and the world. When I was a freshman, I did not understand why I needed to study irrelevant subjects, but I felt thankful that four years later, I graduated with the knowledge and experience gained in different areas.

Reference refer to p.8
Events Highlight

OGUR Fun Fair 2019

On 29 May, OGUR held a fun fair for the University community, featuring game booths for students and staff to have an enjoyable afternoon and to get to know more about GUR and academic advising. We thank everyone for participating in the fair.
**ADVISING ACTIVITIES**

**New Video: Benefits of Academic Advising**

OGUR has recently produced a new video, featuring two PolyU students and an Academic Advisor, to introduce the benefits of academic advising to the PolyU Community. The video is now available at https://polyu.hk/WuRLA.

We would like to thank Dr. Horace Mui (BSE), Athena Lo (ENGL) and Ben Yang (AF) for taking part in the video production.

**Kick-starting “Plan to Learn, Learn to Plan” with OGUR Study Planner**

The OGUR Study Planner was launched for all 2018 cohort students in the Faculty of Business in May 2019. The study planner is an online tool for students to customise and review their study plan for General University Requirements (GUR) subjects and Other Learning Experiences (OLE). Melanie Li, an Accounting and Finance Year 1 student, shared her experience of using the study planner.

A study plan is essential. It helps me have an overview of my study load and to work towards achieving my university goals.

With the OGUR Study Planner, I can now allocate GUR subjects into a study pattern pre-set with major subjects in just a few clicks.

Planning is one of the survival skills for university study, and I encourage freshmen to develop this skill as early as possible.

Before the OGUR Study Planner was available, I needed to copy subjects one by one from the Programme Document.

The study planner helps me check my understanding of GUR, as the tool provides instant feedback for any incorrect input.

I can bring a copy of the study plan generated by OGUR Study Planner to discuss with my Academic Advisor/Academic Counsellor.

OGUR will promote and launch the OGUR Study Planner to all 2019 cohort students in the Faculty of Business in 2019/20. We encourage students to bring their plan and approach their Academic Advisors/Academic Counsellors to seek advice on planning for their study, OLE and Work-Integrated Education.
Office News

Refreshing the reception area and interview rooms

To make the advising environment even more welcoming and relaxing for our students, we have upgraded the decoration of our office reception area and interview rooms with touches of warmth, soft colours and a fresh new look.
Our Work on Academic Integrity

OGUR administers the implementation of Online Tutorial on Academic Integrity at PolyU. The online tutorial is available to PolyU students, including 4-year undergraduates, Senior Year Intakes, Higher Diploma and postgraduate students. It has been a compulsory requirement embedded in the subject of Freshman Seminar of General University Requirements since 2012/13 and delivered on LEARN@PolyU as a standalone course. We support academic departments and students by:

1. Preparing/ updating supporting materials including the booklets *Plagiarism and How to Avoid it: Hot Tips for PolyU Students*, *Online Tutorial on Academic Integrity: A Student Guide and Implementation* and announcements to academic departments, etc.
2. Assuring stable functioning of online tutorial, as well as the student record-checking system.
3. Liaising with ITS, other support units and academic departments to assure the quality of the administration, technical functioning and content of tutorials.
4. Handling staff and students' enquiries on enrolment and completion of the online tutorial on Academic Integrity.

Academic Integrity is a fundamental, yet essential value that all students at PolyU should uphold. OGUR’s work on Academic Integrity can help facilitate students to study in an honest and ethical manner, with quality academic work being done.

Upcoming Events

- **Aug 2019**
  - Students: OGUR Talk
  - Students: Student Ambassadors Training Workshop
  - Students: GUR Workshops

- **Sep 2019**
  - Staff: Academic Advisor Training Workshop I & II
  - Staff & Students: Academic Advising Week

- **Oct 2019**
  - Students: GUR Workshops

Bibliography of “Advantages of General Education Subjects in Undergraduate Programmes” on p.4


