

Hong Kong Polytechnic University Staff Association

香港理工大學教職員協會

Views of the Polytechnic University Staff Association on the UGC Report on Higher Education

1. Regarding Recommendation 1, we feel that instead of identifying a small number of universities as focus of financial support with a view to creating institutions capable of competing at the highest international levels, UGC should identify areas of excellence regardless of which institutions they belong to. This will ensure public funding to support research can get the best value for the money.
2. The Polytechnic University Staff Association strongly opposes the idea of de-linking university staff salaries from those of civil servants'. We believe that the SAR Government is using this as an excuse to unload its responsibility on higher education. The flexibility for universities to determine its own remuneration packages in order to recruit and retain quality faculty members can be achieved within the present system, such as varying senior-junior staff mix in different departments. De-linking will therefore create more problems.
3. We disagree with the idea of putting PolyU and CityU's Higher Diploma programmes on equal footing with associate degrees programmes. Graduates from existing Higher Diploma programmes acquire professional qualifications recognized by various public and private sectors as well as certain overseas universities. On the other hand, associate degree programmes are much more general in nature. If Higher Diploma programmes are going to be phased out and replaced by associate degree programmes, quality of subdegree programmes will deteriorate.
4. We are also very concerned about the impact on staffing if publicly funded Higher Diploma programmes in PolyU and CityU are to be turned self-financed. Phasing out existing Higher Diploma programmes within one, or even two trienniums, without increasing degree places by a corresponding number will certainly create rounds of institutional shockwaves in the two universities, seriously damaging the very foundations of student and staff morale and reducing the cost-effectiveness of the resources allocated for non-HD-related operations.
5. We believe that a set of grievance procedures should be in place to settle disputes between management and staff in the UGC sector that do not get resolved within individual institutions. The procedure should also cover matters related to staffing, appointment and contract renewal.