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13 April 2004

Ms Doris Chan
Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Chan,

Panel on Education
Follow-up to meeting on 15 March 2004

Thank you for your letter of 17 March 2004 requesting clarification and detailed information on the supply of teacher education places for the 2005-2008 triennium.

In the academic planning process, it is an established practice that the Administration will advise the UGC on the specific manpower requirements for disciplines and professions of which the public sector is the major employer or where the relevant community has a strong case for assured provision of adequate manpower. Teacher education falls under this category.

Based on the projected demand for teachers by school level and the Key Learning Area (KLA), the Administration has advised the UGC that the number of UGC-funded pre-service training places in the English Language KLA should be increased by a large extent in the 2005-2008 triennium to meet anticipated demand. On the other hand, the number of places for other KLAs should decrease in the light of reduced demand. However, flexibility would be allowed for institutions to distribute places across KLAs other than English, Chinese, Mathematics and Technology with reference to school demand and

quality of applicants. As Government is on course for meeting its policy objective to upgrade the training of serving kindergarten principals, the number of UGC-funded places for part-time certificate programme in early childhood education would come down accordingly.

The UGC is the process of examining the Academic Development Proposals for 2005-2008 and is seeking clarification from institutions on some of their plans e.g. details of collaborative programmes between institutions in teacher education. We are in active discussion with institutions and the Administration on how best to meet the anticipated manpower needs, having regard to the capabilities and aspirations of institutions as well the level of flexibility afforded by the Administration. At this stage, therefore, it may not be of great help to the Panel if we were to provide figures which will undoubtedly change over the next few weeks. I would therefore seek the Panel's indulgence to revert at a later date when we are able to present a more complete picture.

Yours sincerely,

(Michael V Stone)
Secretary-General

c.c. Secretary for Education and Manpower