

## **Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Bill**

### **Response to the Views and Recommendations on the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Bill provided by Organizations of Beauty Industry**

The Federation of Beauty Industry (Hong Kong), The Cosmetic & Perfumery Association of Hong Kong Limited, International CICA Association of Esthetics, Hong Kong Association of Professional Aestheticians International (APAI) and Association of International Beauty Therapists Limited (AIBT) made a joint submission to the Bills Committee on 7 February 2007, expressing their views on the contents of the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Bill (the Bill) and the policies on the implementation of the Qualifications Framework (QF). The Bills Committee has referred the submission to the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) for a response.

#### **Views in relation to the Bill**

##### *Definition of “Operator”*

2. It is suggested in the submission that the definition of “operator” should be clearly defined under the Bill to include privately-run beauty training institutions. According to Clause 2 of the Bill, “operator” means a person, school, institution, organization or other body, the whole or part of the business of which includes the operation of any learning programme or any part of a learning programme. As the definition of “operator” includes public or private institutions, privately-run beauty training institutions are considered “operators” under the Bill. Also, since the definition covers all operators from different industries, we consider it inappropriate and unnecessary to specify “privately-run beauty training institutions” as “operators”.

#### **Resources Strategy to Support the Implementation of the QF**

##### *Subsidy to Training Providers*

3. The submission also suggests increasing the training subsidy for the beauty industry, and considers that the Government should allocate provisions for setting up an academic accreditation grant in order to assist small and medium training providers to pay for the accreditation fees charged by the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA).

4. At present, training providers of the beauty industry can provide appropriate training for the sector by taking part in Government-subsidized training schemes, such as the Skills Upgrading Scheme and Employees Retraining Scheme. As for providing grants to cover the accreditation fees, in the LC Paper No. CB(2)196/06-07(03) submitted to the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 31 October 2006, we have proposed to make available a grant to training providers to cover the full cost of undergoing “initial evaluation” by the HKCAA, and to subsidize 50% - 75% of the “programme validation” fees<sup>1</sup>. The relevant proposal and the resources strategy to support the implementation of the QF will be subject to approval by the Finance Committee of the LegCo (Finance Committee) after the enactment of the Bill. Upon implementation of the subsidy scheme, eligible training providers (including those of the beauty industry) may apply for the accreditation grant.

#### *Subsidy to Assessment Agencies*

5. The submission proposes that members of the industry with ample training experience should be appointed as assessment agencies under the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism. The assessment criteria should be determined by the industry while the relevant funding should be provided by the EMB. In this connection, as indicated in the LC Paper No. CB(2)196/06-07(03) submitted to the LegCo, the EMB will propose to the Finance Committee on the provision of financial assistance to assessment agencies appointed under the RPL mechanism. The proposed measures include a one-off grant to assist assessment agencies to develop the assessment mechanism and acquire the necessary facilities; and a subsidy of the accreditation fee incurred by the agency for determining its competence in performing RPL assessments (the subsidy is temporarily pitched at 50% of the accreditation fee).

#### **An Industry-led QF**

6. It is also pointed out in the submission that the development of the QF must be “industry-led”. In fact, we have been adhering to the “industry-led” principle in implementing the QF for different industries. So far, we have set up Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) for 12 industries, including the beauty industry. The aim is to, through the participation of representatives of individual industries, formulate a set of industry-specific requirements and standards (i.e. Specification of Competency Standards (SCSs)) which are

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<sup>1</sup> The grant will cover 75% of the accreditation fees for programmes designed according to the Specification of Competency Standards developed under the QF. For other programmes, the subsidy level will be pitched at 50%.

generally accepted and recognized by the respective industries, thereby establishing the requirements of the industries. Based on the SCSs, training providers will be able to design training courses relevant to the requirements of the industries. We are encouraging training providers, including subsidized and privately-run organizations, to design training courses according to the SCSs developed by the industries. As regards quality assurance, the HKCAA will also use the SCSs as the benchmarks for evaluating individual courses while the assessors are experts from the respective industries.

### **Conclusion**

7. We would like to express our gratitude to the training providers of the beauty industry for their efforts in manpower training as well as their support to the Bill. We shall continue to listen to the views of members of the industry and work with them in the implementation of the QF in order to enhance the competitiveness of our human resources.

Education and Manpower Bureau  
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