

**Questions Raised at the Meeting of the Bills Committee on
17 March 2006 and the Response from the
Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation**

At the meeting of the Bills Committee on the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Bill (the Bill) held on 17 March 2006, the paper on “Arrangements for Forming Assessment Panels” (Paper CB(2)1374/05-06(01)) was discussed. The Executive Director of the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) presented the paper and informed Members of following :

- i) The HKCAA adopts the “fit for purpose” principle in the formation of accreditation panels, which should be relevant to the vocational discipline, objective and QF level of the course being accredited.
- ii) The accreditation panels are to adopt the *Specification for Competency standards* set out by the respective Industry Training Advisory Committees and the *QF Generic Level Descriptors* as common benchmarks. This will ensure that all accreditation panels are applying a consistent standard in the accreditation work.
- iii) In the formation of accreditation principles, the principles of “peer review”, “independent judgement” and “balanced participation” are emphasized.
- iv) Under the “peer review” principle, accreditation panel members are selected from those who have industries and/or profound subject knowledge and understanding about the subject/vocational area being accredited.
- v) Under the principle of “independent judgement”, members of an accreditation panel are appointed on their personal capacity and undertake the accreditation with an impartial, fair and open attitude. The panel will formulate its independent view according to the intended learning course objectives. The

HKCAA will make final decision on the accreditation and the members of the panel will not be personally liable to the final outcome of the accreditation.

- vi) In satisfying the principle of “balanced participation”, the HKCAA will consider the following factors in the choice of panel members:
 - (a) The member should be an experienced academic staff with experience in offering or teaching similar courses. Examples of such members are course leaders, teachers.
 - (b) The member should be a practitioner in the relevant industry, and has a good understanding of that industry’s training needs. Examples of such members include professionals, employer, training officer, employees etc.

2. The most appropriate proportion of members with these two background is determined with a flexible approach, according to the special features and QF levels of the course being accredited. For example, the panel for accrediting a degree course will comprise more academic members (some may even be come from overseas). For the accreditation of a vocational training course and a course at QF Levels 1 or 2, most of the panel members will be practitioners in the relevant industry. The HKCAA has not laid down any pre-determined proportion of academic and non-academic members in a panel, in order to satisfy the “fit for purpose” accreditation principle”.

3. At the same meeting, the Bills Committee also requested for information about the profile of the subject specialists from the vocational sectors who have been added to the HKCAA’s Register of Subject Specialists. In this regard, the HKCAA has since last year enlisted 309 subject specialists all of whom have profound knowledge and experience in their respective vocational sectors. Among them, 69% are employers and practitioners of the relevant industry; 28% are teachers of vocational courses or personnel specialized in skills upgrading at training centres; and 3% are advisors in the trade (including those experienced practitioners who have retired). 41% of this pool of 309 specialists are

members or have close connections with relevant professional body or trade organizations.

Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation
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