

Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Bill

Accreditation of SUS and ERS Courses

At the meeting of the Bills Committee on the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Bill (the Bill) held on 31 October 2006, the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) was requested to provide information on the arrangements for accrediting training courses offered under the Skills Upgrading Scheme (SUS) and the Employees Retraining Scheme (ERS).

HKCAA's Quality Assurance Process

2. The HKCAA will be specified as the Accreditation Authority under the Bill and be responsible for quality assurance of courses leading to qualifications recognized under the Qualifications Framework (QF). HKCAA adopts a “fitness for purpose” and streamlined approach in conducting accreditation, in order to cater for the diverse needs and circumstances of a wide range of education and training providers under the QF.

3. The accreditation of a training course involves two stages, i.e. initial assessment of the provider and validation of their courses. All operators who wish to offer courses recognized under the QF will have to undergo the first stage of the process, i.e. initial assessment, before their courses are validated. This is necessary in order to ensure that the operators satisfy the threshold standards to operate courses in terms of their organization management, quality assurance, course development, staffing and physical resources.

Quality Assurance of SUS/ERS Courses

4. In 2005, the HKCAA conducted a pilot study to examine how SUS and ERS courses should be accredited and recognized under the QF. The outcome of the study is positive, and the HKCAA is satisfied that overarching quality assurance systems are in place under both schemes to

assure the quality of courses provided by the respective training providers.

5. Following the pilot study, the HKCAA conducted a simplified accreditation exercise for both SUS and ERS courses. In partnership with the SUS Secretariat, the Employees Retraining Board and the relevant industry working groups, the HKCAA conducted visits to various SUS/ERS course providers on a sampling basis. Based on the findings of the study, the HKCAA affirmed that the providers concerned had met the threshold quality standards and criteria, and hence it is likely that all SUS and ERS providers will meet the requirements for the purpose of operating SUS/ERS courses under the QF.

6. After the enactment of the Bill, the HKCAA will, after determining that SUS and ERS providers and courses have met QF standards, upload the relevant qualifications onto the Qualifications Register. The HKCAA will continue to monitor the standards of these courses and make appropriate suggestions for improvement if necessary.