

For information on 23 April 2007

**Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to the Provision of
Boarding Places, Senior Secondary Education and Employment
Opportunities for Children with Special Educational Needs**

**Further Education/Training Opportunities for Students with
Special Educational Needs**

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to inform Members of the present position regarding the possible further education/training opportunities for students with special educational needs (SEN) under the New Senior Secondary (NSS) Academic Structure.

Background

2. Under the NSS Academic Structure, students with SEN will have three years of senior secondary education, like their counterparts in ordinary schools. On completion of the secondary education, these students will also have the opportunities to pursue further education/training according to their academic achievement, specific needs, aptitudes and interests.

For Students with SEN Pursuing Ordinary Curriculum

Higher Education

3. Students with SEN capable of pursuing post-secondary education will not be deprived of their chance to study at tertiary institutions. Admission to the University Grants Committee-funded institutions is based on merits. As a matter of principle, all students are expected to meet the same learning outcomes and achieve the same academic standards for graduation.

4. Students with SEN may choose to disclose their disabilities to facilitate the institutions in their planning. Individual institutions will make suitable adjustments in programme delivery and examination/assessment arrangements where necessary, while maintaining the academic standards and quality. For example, special equipment will be provided to magnify examination papers for those with visual impairment. Special tables with adjustable heights will be provided for those wheelchair-bound students, etc.

Vocational Education/Training

5. The Vocational Training Council (VTC) offers a wide range of vocational education and training programmes, through its Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, School of Business and Information Systems, Youth Colleges, and Training and Development Centres, for school leavers at different levels and adult learners to acquire skills and knowledge to enhance their employability.

6. VTC administers a Special Admission Scheme (SAS) for students with SEN. Under SAS, students applying for VTC's courses do not need to go through the usual entry process on a competitive basis with other applicants. They will be given an offer as long as they are able to meet the minimum entry requirements for the course concerned and have passed an interview¹. VTC will organise a briefing session on the Scheme for interested students, their parents and teachers to provide necessary information and assistance before the recruitment commences.

7. Upon admission under SAS, students and their parents will be arranged to attend tailor-made orientation programmes which introduce the services and support measures available at VTC. Such services and support measures include the provision of essential technical aids, counseling service and additional coaching. Depending on the nature of their disabilities, students may apply for and be given exemption from completing some specific modules. In some cases, more time is allowed and other special arrangements are arranged for these students when they undergo assessments where necessary. In the 2006/07 academic year, the number of students admitted to VTC's courses under SAS was about 240.

¹ The interview is conducted by a panel comprising representatives from Education and Manpower Bureau, Labour Department and VTC. The purpose is to assess the applicant's ability and likelihood in completing the course concerned.

Students Pursuing NSS(ID) Curriculum

8. Opportunities for further studies or training are being explored with service providers such as VTC and other non-governmental organisations for students who pursue the NSS(ID) curriculum, based on the existing pathways. It will also involve professional decisions on what students will achieve after completion of NSS. It should be noted that the SAS administered by VTC is also applicable to students with intellectual disability (ID), who wish to pursue further education/training at VTC other than at its Skills Centres. Other learning/training opportunities for students with ID are recapitulated in the ensuing paragraphs.

Vocational Rehabilitation Training

9. Skills Centres provide vocational training to people with disabilities aged 15 or above with a view to equipping them with the necessary skills to secure open employment and to live independently. The majority of full-time programmes offered at the Skills Centres are at the operative or semi-skills level and are organized in a modular structure which allows trainees to proceed at their own pace. The training programmes are designed to meet the employment market demand /trend as well as the aspirations of people with disabilities.

10. VTC will continue to provide vocational education/training opportunities to students with disabilities through its Skills Centres and other operational units so that the students may acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for employment purposes.

Training Opportunities in Rehabilitation Services

11. For students with severe ID who are unable to benefit from vocational training or sheltered employment, Day Activity Centre provides training to enable them to become more independent in their daily lives and to prepare them for better integration into the community. Training programmes are provided in the areas of motor skills, self-help skills, communication skills, domestic skills, community living skills, simple work skills, social and interpersonal skills and leisure and recreation skills. There are also social and recreational activities, including participation in community events and activities.

12. For students who are capable of taking up vocational training or sheltered work, a wide range of vocational training services are available for them to be equipped with the skills for employment in open market or in a sheltered environment. These vocational rehabilitation services include Sheltered Workshop, Supported Employment, Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centre, Integrated Vocational Training Centre, On the Job Training Programme for People with Disabilities and Sunnyway – On the Job Training Programme for Young People with Disabilities. These services aim to enhance the working capacity of the trainees and enable them to secure, retain and advance in suitable employment, which in turn facilitate their further integration into the community. Apart from work skills training, these services also arrange a variety of social, recreational and life enrichment activities including arts programmes to develop the trainees' potential and abilities as well as improving their quality of life.

13. Apart from the above training programmes, there are also a series of community support programmes to provide people with disabilities the opportunities to participate in a variety of activities which meet their social, recreational and developmental needs during their spare hours. These programmes include the Social and Recreational Centre for the Disabled, Gateway Club and Personal Development Programme.

Programmes by Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)

14. A variety of programmes are operated by NGOs with subvention from the Administration to enable people with disabilities to acquire knowledge and skills. The programmes include information and technology on computer, practical English, basic Putonghua, communication skills, effective interpersonal skills in work setting and effective monetary management, etc.

Advice Sought

15. Members are requested to note the contents of this paper.

Education and Manpower Bureau
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