

Submission by the Academic Staff Association of the HKIEd on
Funding for the Hong Kong Institute of Education in the 2005-08 Triennium

Members of the Hong Kong Institute of Education are shocked and anguished over the substantial funding cut on our Institute from \$632 million in 2004/05 to \$422 million in 2007/08 as recently announced by the UGC. In the past ten years, the HKIEd has secured a lot of remarkable achievements, such as obtaining an excellent report in the Teaching and Learning Quality Process Review, gaining self-accrediting status, and building up a professional teacher training force with 60% of the academic staff now possessing a doctorate degree. We are deeply saddened to see all these efforts and achievements, which could have turned into positive energy for the future education reform in Hong Kong, being disregarded in the recent UGC budget proposal. We therefore would like to seek ~~your~~ [the Panel's](#) kind help in ameliorating the drastic funding cut on us, and more importantly, in reducing the huge damaging effect it will cause to teacher education in the future.

Although we understand well that reduction in funding is somehow inevitable given both the decline in the number of school-age children and the difficult financial situation of the government, however, a cut of 33% of the total funding will undoubtedly be devastating to the development of any institute, not least our young institute. The extent of this cut, which much exceeds those suffered by other institutions, also gives the unfortunate impression to the public that the Government takes teacher education to be something of little importance while ironically it is professing that teacher education is the most effective, among a number of educational measures, to raise the quality of school education and ensure success in the education reform. This very bad signal would not only tell the public that education is unimportant, but also hinder the professionalization of Hong Kong education, which is extremely crucial in the development of Hong Kong into a knowledge-based metropolis.

For your information, our estimate of [the breakdown of](#) the 33% reduction in funding is as follows:

1. Reduction in student number – 15%
2. Complete removal of the front-end loading – 7%
3. Reduction of student unit cost in 07-08 – 5%
4. Reduction of staff salary following the civil service in Jan. 05 – 3%

In order to give reasonable room for the development of teacher education, we

would like to suggest reducing the funding cut through the following ways:

(1) Cancel the cut in places for professional upgrading

About 60% of [the](#) cut in the student numbers comes from in-service education for ~~practieing~~ [practising](#) teachers. This is totally unacceptable since the demand for in-service teacher education is increasing rapidly with the advent of various educational reforms. The information note provided by the UGC Secretariat to the Panel on Education dated 3 January 2005 also ~~eonfirmed~~ [confirms](#) such a great demand for teacher professional development resulting from the (3+3+4) educational reform, which however has been completely left out of the planning for the coming triennium.

Apart from this, training places for serving kindergarten teachers are also greatly reduced from 570 places per year to 200 per year. This is also unacceptable as there are still about 6,000 kindergarten teachers waiting to be trained. In fact, in many developed countries, kindergarten teachers hold Bachelor's degrees. Hong Kong is far below the international standard in this regard.

For the above reasons, we propose that the student number cuts in these two areas be cancelled.

We also propose that undergraduate senior year places be assigned to HKIED for admitting suitable Associate Degree graduates who had aspired to join the degree programmes at HKIED when they enrolled in our Associate Degree programme.

(2) Extend the year for the complete removal of front-end loading to 2011

We propose that the removal of the remaining front-end loading be spaced out over two trienniums until 2011, so as to minimize the devastating impacts on HKIED when it is already suffering other cuts.

(3) Replace the "0-0-5" funding model by the "0-0-0" model

The Government promised that the UGC-funded institutions will be funded on the "0-0-X" model for the three years from 2005 to 2008, with the actual figure X to be determined in due course with reference to the financial situation pertaining at the time a final decision has to be made regarding the funding arrangement for 2007-08. Therefore it is not reasonable to fix the starting point at "0-0-5" at this stage, which is especially unnecessary given the current improved financial situation. We therefore demand that the "0-0-5" funding model be replaced by the "0-0-0" model.

