

Panel on Education

List of outstanding items for discussion

(position as at 8 November 2004)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. University admission system

In discussing curriculum reform on 21 January 2002, the Panel on Education requested the Administration to ensure that the future senior secondary curriculum and university admission system would align with the new curriculum for basic education.

Discussed at the
Special Panel
Meeting on 29
October

Public consultation on “Reforming the Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education” commenced on 20 October 2004. The consultation document sets out the implications of the new academic structure on university admission, namely a 4-year curriculum at university; there is likely to be a broader set of criteria for admission; and students are more likely to be admitted by faculty rather than by specific departments.

A working party has been set up to work on the details. The target is to provide schools and the public specific criteria for admission to individual faculty within 2005.

2. Transparency and representation of the new Education Commission (EC)

Some members of the Bills Committee on Education Reorganization (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2002 were of the view that the new EC following the merger should become a statutory body in the longer term in order to enhance its advisory role. At the meeting of the House Committee on 7 February 2003, Ms Cyd HO suggested that the issue should be followed up by the Panel on Education.

To be confirmed

3. Implementation of four-year first-degree programmes

Ms Emily LAU noted that there were views in the community opposing the proposed four-year structure for first-degree programmes. On 5 July 2003, she suggested

Discussed at the
Special Panel
Meeting on 29

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for discussion**

that the Panel should discuss with the Administration on the implementation of four-year first-degree programmes.

October

Public consultation on “Reforming the Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education” commenced on 20 October 2004. The Administration proposes a 3+3 structure for secondary education, and correspondingly the extension of undergraduate programmes from 3 to 4 years.

4. Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) to conduct examinations outside Hong Kong

The Bills Committee on the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (Amendment) Bill 2003 requested the Secretary for Education and Manpower to report to the Panel on how HKEAA would enforce measures to secure confidentiality of public examinations when HKEAA is about to conduct examinations outside Hong Kong.

To be confirmed

5. Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme in primary schools

At the meeting on 17 November 2003, members of the Panel on Education expressed support for the implementation of the NET Scheme in primary schools and requested the Administration to review the performance of NETs in primary schools with a view to developing a long-term strategy for the provision of NETs in schools.

13 December
2004

The issue was originally scheduled for discussion at the Panel meeting to be held on 8 November 2004. As agreed at the special Panel meeting on 29 October, discussion will be postponed to the next meeting on 13 December, at which the Administration will update Members on latest development of the NET Scheme in primary schools.

6. School self-evaluation (SSE)

At its meeting on 3 March 2004, the Bills Committee on Education (Amendment) Bill 2002 decided to refer the item of SSE including its impact on teachers' workload in schools to the Panel on Education for follow-up discussion.

13 December
2004

7. Future developments in the higher education sector

At the meeting on 15 March 2004, members of the Panel on Education requested the University Grants Committee (UGC) to report its work progress in respect of the proposals as detailed in its document entitled "To make a difference, to move with the times". Secretary General, UGC undertook to revert to the Panel later in 2004.

To be confirmed

8. Remuneration systems in UGC-funded institutions after deregulation of university salaries

The Panel on Education received the views and concerns of the deputations on the matter at the meeting on 5 July 2004. Members of the Panel on Education in general expressed concern about the disputes between staff and management, and the role of the governing bodies of UGC-funded institutions in the development and implementation of their new remuneration systems. They considered that UGC-funded institutions should establish fair, open and transparent appeal mechanisms to facilitate the establishment and implementation of the new remuneration systems. In addition, some members suggested that a mechanism should be established to monitor the performance of university councils and the attendance of their members at meetings; and the minutes of the meetings of university councils should be made public.

To be confirmed

Members agreed that the Panel should follow up the issue in the new term. In this connection, Dr YEUNG Sum requested representatives of university administration to relay the views and concerns of deputations to university councils; and suggested that the universities, UGC and EMB should follow up the following issues raised by the deputations –

- (a) the offer of contract terms to new recruits which would affect the universities' ability to attract good academic staff;
- (b) larger percentages of salary reductions for staff

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

in the lower echelon than those for staff in the top echelon;

- (c) availability of appeal and grievance mechanisms for staff who felt aggrieved by the implementation of the new remuneration system to lodge complaints;
- (d) adoption of reasonable and uniform salary scales for similar grades in UGC-funded institutions; and
- (e) complaints against universities' compelling serving academic staff on substantiated terms to accept the conversion of their terms of employment to contract terms.

9. Sample constitutions for Incorporated Management Committee (IMC)

Under the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004, aided schools are required to establish an IMC within a transition period of five years starting from 1 January 2005. To establish an IMC, aided schools are required to submit a draft constitution to the Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower for approval.

To be confirmed

At the meeting of the Bills Committee on Education (Amendment) Bill 2002 on 6 July 2004, Ms Cyd HO, Chairman of the Bills Committee, suggested that in view of time constraint, deliberation on the sample constitutions for IMC should be referred to the Panel for follow-up.

10. Improving teacher-class ratio and class sizes in primary and secondary schools

At the meeting on 19 July 2004, members of the Panel on Education discussed with deputations and the Administration the implementation of the recommendations of the Education Commission Report No.5 on improving teacher-class ratios and class sizes in schools. Some members and deputations

8 November 2004
(under the agenda
item of
Implementation
of small class

**Proposed timing
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suggested that the Administration should take the opportunity of a declining student population to implement small class teaching in order to improve the teacher-class ratios and class sizes in schools on an incremental basis.

teaching)

The Administration plans to start increasing the teacher-to-class ratio from 1.4:1 to 1.5:1 in whole-day primary schools in the 2005/06 school year to relieve teachers' workload and to allow language and mathematics teachers to concentrate on teaching the subjects they specialize in.

As for secondary schools, the teacher-to-class ratio will be considered under the proposed new academic structure for senior secondary education. For the class size, there will be a significant decrease on the demand of the secondary school places after the double-cohort year. The class size will therefore be maintained up to and including the double cohort year, and will be reviewed in the subsequent years.

11. Regulation of private intermediaries providing overseas studies services

Item referred to the Panel on 21 July 2004 under the LegCo Redress System. Duty Roster Member and Invited Members receiving a concern group on 17 July 2004 considered that to protect the interests of students and parents, the Government should regulate the operation of private intermediaries providing overseas studies services by way of appropriate amendments to the Education Ordinance.

To be confirmed

The Administration has explained that services provided by such private intermediaries are mainly related to applications of travel documents, and transport and accommodation arrangements for admission to education programmes offered by overseas institutions. These services are commercial in nature and users of such services are safeguarded by relevant consumer-related legislation. The Administration also pointed out that many overseas countries have mechanisms in place to safeguard the rights and interests of their non-local students. Hong Kong students who are not satisfied with the education services and accommodation provided by an overseas institution may lodge their complaints with the

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appropriate authority in the overseas country concerned.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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