

“Grant to support the modernisation and development of the examination systems of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority”
[FCR(2005-06)33]

Supplementary Note

Purpose

This paper addresses the question raised by the Chairman of the Finance Committee regarding how the current information technology proposals based on the earlier Information Systems and Services Review by an external Review Committee set up by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) would help to overcome the problems revealed from the subsequent misreporting incident involving the 2005 Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination English Language (Syllabus B) oral examination results, and what specific benefits or outcome the Legislative Council could expect from the current funding proposal.

The review and the misreporting incident

2. HKEAA set up the Review Committee in March 2005 to conduct a thorough review of HKEAA’s information systems and services in order to meet future challenges.

3. We explained, vide panel paper LC Paper No. CB(2)2538/04-05(01) dated 12 September 2005, the misreporting incident and reported that the Review Committee had submitted its final review report at the beginning of August 2005, before HKEAA discovered the misreporting incident on 11 August 2005. Before the incident occurred, HKEAA had already been considering a proposal to establish onscreen marking centres for scanning and centralised marking of examination scripts as a first step in eliminating the manual handling and processing of examination scripts, taking into account the recommendations in the review report. Although the review was completed before the misreporting incident, the current funding proposal based on the recommendations of the Review Committee will fundamentally improve our public examination systems and address the problems (including those revealed in the misreporting incident) in one go.

The current funding proposal in addressing the problems revealed from the misreporting incident

4. The misreporting incident arose from a failure in staff communication and supervision in implementing a patch (a computer programme fix) designed to correct a previously-identified programming error in the HKCEE computer system. This

computer system involves extensive manual intervention and batch processing at each stage of the results processing. This highlights the problem of the lack of automation and the highly manual processes of the existing examination systems of HKEAA. The current funding proposal seeks to eliminate as much as possible the manual processing of examination results (including the marks adjustment process in which the specific programming error occurred), and replace the extensive manual intervention and batch processing with fully automated processes. The current funding proposal will help to minimise the chances of human error and shorten the processing time for examination results.

5. The benefits of the measures under the current funding proposal are elaborated in detail in paragraphs 15 to 18 of FCR(2005-06)33.

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