

Panel on Education

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 8 November 2005)

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

1. Remuneration systems in University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions after deregulation of university salaries

The Panel received the views and concerns of the deputations on the matter at the meeting on 5 July 2004. Members in general expressed concerns 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. Members agreed that the Panel should revisit the issue at a future meeting.

To be confirmed

2. The new Student Travel Subsidy Scheme

In discussing the proposed merger of Student Travel Subsidy Scheme and Cross-net Subsidy Scheme at the meeting on 8 November 2004, some members considered it necessary to review the eligibility criteria for a full rate and a half rate grant under the merged scheme (the new Student Travel Subsidy Scheme) for applicants from families with different incomes and number of members. The Administration undertook to revert to the Panel at a future meeting.

To be confirmed

3. School Development and Accountability

The Panel discussed the progress of implementation of the school development and accountability framework at its meeting on 13 December 2004, with emphasis on the implementation of school self-evaluation and the external school review processes. Members agreed to revisit the issue and meet deputations at a future meeting. The Administration will provide a proposed school list in due course.

To be confirmed

4. Use of Language Fund – proposals to strengthen support in language education at pre-primary and primary levels

At the meeting on 9 May 2005, members requested the Administration to review the allocation for the professional development of pre-primary teachers and keep members informed of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research's (SCOLAR's) final decision on the issue. Members also requested the Administration to arrange the Chairman of the SCOLAR to brief the Panel on the progress of its implementation at a future meeting. The Administration agreed to revert to the Panel later in the year. To be confirmed

5. Review on governance structure of UGC-funded institutions and their grievances and complaints mechanisms

At the meeting on 9 May 2005, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that the Panel should follow up discussion on the governance structure of UGC-funded institutions and their internal grievances and complaint mechanisms. He also suggested that deputations should be invited to present views at the meeting. To be confirmed

6. Review of student financial assistance schemes

At the meeting on 11 July 2005, the Panel requested the Administration to review the provision of financial assistances to needy students under various student financial assistance schemes, having regard to the impact of the increases in tuition fees under the new academic structure for senior secondary education and higher education. The Administration agreed to revert to the Panel with the review results and recommendations in the new session. To be confirmed

7. Grant to support the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) in the development and updating of its information technology infrastructure, establishment of scanning facilities and online marking centres, and the automation of examination operations

Item proposed by the Administration. According to the Administration, the proposed funding is required for HKEAA in developing and updating its information technology (IT) 14 November 2005

infrastructure, establishing the scanning facilities and online marking centres, as well as automating the public examination operations. The Administration has explained that the objective is to achieve an enhanced examination infrastructure, which could keep up with the pace of the increasing demand of assessments and supporting logistics like making use of barcode technology to check examination attendance and count examination scripts. The outcome will be higher marking reliability for more open-ended forms of assessment, reduced manual processes, and solutions to address current operations problems like missing scripts.

8. Future development of the textbook industry

Item proposed by Mrs Selina CHOW at the meeting on 13 October 2005. Members noted that arising from the Administration's proposals on various copyright-related issues, the textbook industry had expressed grave concern about the impact of the proposed exemption of non-profit-making educational establishments and educational establishment subvented by Government from the proposed criminal liability for copying and distribution of copyright infringing printed works on the future development of the textbook industry. Members agreed to receive views from the industry and other sectors which might have different perspectives on the issue, including the Consumer Council which conducted annual surveys on textbook prices. Members of the Panel on Commerce and Industry will be invited to join the discussion of this item. To be confirmed

9. Quality and subsidisation of sub-degree programmes

Item proposed by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong at the meeting on 13 October 2005. Mr CHEUNG expressed concern about the quality and subsidisation of sub-degree programmes. He suggested that the Panel should receive views from stakeholders of the sub-degree sector on the matter. To be confirmed

10. Reduction of classes in secondary schools and merger of secondary schools

Item proposed by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong at the meeting on 13 October 2005. Mr CHEUNG expressed concern about the reduction of classes in secondary schools in the light of a declining student population, and the proposed merger of March 2006

secondary schools with less than 12 classes.

11. Arts and cultural studies in school education

Item proposed by Mrs Selina CHOW at the meeting on 13 October 2005. Mrs CHOW considered that the Panel should discuss the curriculum for Arts and Cultural studies in schools in the light of the Government's policy commitment to enrich the quality of life in Hong Kong. To be confirmed

12. Injection into the Language Fund

Item proposed by the Administration. The purpose of the injection into the Language Fund is to increase resources for enhancing language education in schools, including more focused support for schools to strengthen the teaching and learning of English Language and widen exposure to English outside class, as well as the wider use of Putonghua to teach Chinese Language. 12 December 2005

13. Review of medium of instruction for secondary schools and secondary school places allocation

Item proposed by the Administration. The Administration would brief members on the long-term arrangements of the medium of instruction policy for secondary schools and the secondary school places allocation system. 12 December 2005