

**For information
on 9 July 2007**

Legislative Council Panel on Education

**Note to the Panel on Issues
Related to Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy**

Introduction

This Note is submitted by the University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat in response to issues raised by individuals and organisations at Panel meetings held on 28 February and 13 April 2007- as set out in LC Paper No. CB(2)2071/06-07(06). The note does not deal with matters that properly fall within the purview of other parties. The Note generally follows the order of issues set out in LC Paper No. CB(2)2071/06-07(06).

(1) Role, Functions and Composition of the UGC

2. The Terms of Reference of the UGC are set out in Chapter 1 of the UGC Notes on Procedures – at **Annex A** – and the current Membership is at **Annex B**. Chapters 1 and 10 of the UGC Notes on Procedures – attached at **Annexes A and C** set out the role of the UGC and the way the various parties interact with each other.

3. We fully agree that the UGC should and does act as a ‘buffer’ between the UGC funded institutions and the government. The UGC takes its role very seriously and believes that it has always acted in the best interests of both Hong Kong and the UGC funded institutions. This involves a difficult balancing act, supporting and protecting academic freedom and the legitimate areas of institutional autonomy on the one hand, and taking into account the legitimate interests of society and the government on the other.

4. The UGC is entrusted by the government to work with the institutions in their development, to make recommendations on how the funds made available by the government should be disbursed amongst the institutions, and to consider and draw up policy recommendations for the further development of the sector. As such the UGC needs to take a positive and proactive role in matters. We believe that each institution should excel in the role it has agreed with the UGC. We believe that each institution should seek to achieve international competitiveness in teaching and its focused areas of research. We believe that quality of provision is vital. Thus we are proactive in working with institutions in these areas.

5. This background deals with a number of the general comments made on the role and function of the UGC, and we would like to respond specifically to a number of others.

6. There are suggestions that the UGC Secretary-General (SG,UGC) 'reports' to the Permanent Secretary of Education and Manpower (PSEM- now PSED) and that the Secretary for Education and Manpower (SEM- now SED) is the vote controller of UGC funds. (*Comments (1)b. and e.*). Both are factually incorrect. The Secretary-General does not report to the PSEM. He reports to the Chairman, UGC. The Vote Controller of the UGC Head of Expenditure (Head 190) is the SG, UGC. The position has not changed for years – as a glance at the Estimates will show. The UGC has also not lost its autonomy in allocating resources. The funding proposals presented to the Finance Committee of LegCo are derived from recommendations from the UGC to the Chief Executive, to whom the UGC formally reports. The method by which those recommendations are processed in the Administration has not changed over the years.

7. There is a suggestion (*comment (1)d.*) that UGC members tend to do the bidding of the Administration. If one looks at the membership, we consider such a charge cannot be sustained. We have eight senior academics from overseas (some (former) Vice Chancellors) who have no connection with the Administration. We have five prominent local academics who speak their own minds freely and we have ten prominent local members of society. There are no government officials on the UGC. In short, it is an independent body.

8. There is a comment (*comment (1)g.*) that the setting up of a Quality Assurance Council (QAC) by the UGC ‘provides another instrument for the Administrative and the UGC to interfere with academic freedom and institution autonomy’. This is a regrettable and misguided comment. Quality assurance bodies are common – and important – features of many of the best systems around the world. They are found in, *inter alia*, USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand etc. Harvard and Yale are subject to external quality assurance. So are Oxford and Cambridge. Third party review of quality is not an interference in academic freedom or institutional autonomy.

(2) Funding and Research Grants for UGC funded institutions

9. A significant number of the comments made in this section are in respect of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) and have been fully aired in the Commission of Inquiry. As such we shall not address them here. Here we shall deal with the comments regarding research.

10. All research proposals processed by the Research Grants Council (RGC) are assessed purely on the basis of academic merit. This is the basic principle that the RGC has followed since it was set up in 1991. We consider the comments made to be unfounded – and perhaps based on wrong perceptions, misunderstandings, or partial information. Therefore, we wish to clarify the points (following the numbering in LC Paper No. CB(2)2071/06-07(06) as follow -

- (a) *Comment (2)d.* In the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2006, the research outputs were assessed in the context of four categories of scholarship: scholarship of discovery; scholarship of integration; scholarship of application; and scholarship of teaching. The main consideration was academic quality of the research outputs. All research outputs were evaluated by reviewers, many of whom are renowned academics enjoying international reputation. It is therefore unfair to allege that RAE 2006 was conducted on the basis of “commercial, economic and social science criteria”.
- (b) *Comment (2)e.* The UGC is not prejudiced against research on local issues. In fact, in RAE 2006, when examining research

output items of a local nature, the UGC advised its RAE panel members to assess whether the item represented a contribution to the work of the international research community in terms of its intellectual content, as well as rigour of process and methodology, instead of whether the nature of the item is international or local. There is no basis to suggest that such treatment, which is in line with international practice, in anyway affects academic freedom.

- (c) *Comment (2)f.* The UGC always stresses that quality is more important than quantity in research. This can be reflected by the following paragraph in the Guidance Notes of RAE 2006 (a public document) :

“Although a **maximum of six** output items can be submitted, **individual staff member may wish to submit fewer items, even only one item.** A researcher can be judged to meet the quality threshold on the basis of one single item of high quality. The UGC wishes to emphasize that the focus of the RAE is **not on quantity**, but on the **quality** of output.” (emphasis added)

- (d) *Comment (2)g.* The funding decisions of the RGC are based on its peer review mechanism, which has been widely accepted by the academic community and is the practice in other jurisdictions. In addition, an applicant may appeal to the Council if there have been procedural errors by the Panel concerned in handling his / her application.
- (e) *Comment (2)h.* The suggestion that private donations will affect institutional autonomy is misplaced. Institutions have freedom and authority to decline donations if they come with unacceptable conditions or they consider the conditions would affect academic freedom. In many countries, private donations are an important source of funding in research and teaching. Many corporations in developed economies (notably the United States) donate substantial amounts to their tertiary institutions, and partner with them in scientific research. Such collaboration often produces good results and leads to

many significant scientific discoveries, and ultimately new products that benefit the whole human race.

(3) Governance of UGC-Funded Institutions

11. UGC-funded institutions started their governance reviews in 2003 and they are at various stages of reviewing their governance structures. The major features of the reviews conducted by the institutions cover the size and composition of the governing bodies, fitness for purpose of the governance structure, review of the relevant Ordinances, drawing up codes of practices, need for periodic reviews of the effectiveness of governing bodies, *etc.* Since some of the review recommendations (*e.g.* to reconstitute the university Council and downsizing) will require legislative changes, the relevant institutions are now working on the legislative amendments. We shall report back to the LegCo Panel of Education within the year.

12. All current Heads of the eight UGC-funded institutions, as well as most of the senior management teams, have academic backgrounds. They have rich experience in the higher education sector, including teaching and research. Each of the UGC-funded institutions enjoys autonomy in its management and it is also natural for the institutions to respond to community needs and expectations. In pursuing excellence in teaching and research, the institutions also have to strike a balance with their responsibilities to the public and the taxpayers as well.

13. Other comments under this section will be dealt with by EDB.

(4) Employment of staff of UGC-funded institutions

14. As recommended in the Higher Education Review Report, in order for institutions to compete at an international level, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved in April 2003 the de-linking of university pay from the civil service scales, which came into effect on 1 July 2003. As a result, the institutions have the freedom and flexibility to determine the appropriate remuneration structure to recruit and retain staff in order to suit their different roles and missions, be more responsive to changing local and international conditions, as well as strengthen their ability to attract talents locally and globally.

15. Under the de-linked environment and the principle of institutional autonomy, institutions, being autonomous statutory bodies, are empowered to manage their internal affairs on remuneration-related matters.

Institutions have independent Councils and their internal management has established systems of audit, monitoring, as well as staff appeal and grievances mechanisms to ensure that their human resources policies, including remuneration packages and retention of staff are reasonable and fair.

16. We cannot agree that having different terms of appointment for staff is a factor affecting academic freedom. Many excellent universities around the world have a mixture of academic staff on substantiated and non-substantiated terms. In any event, according to data reported by the eight UGC-funded institutions, there has been an increase in the total number of substantiated staff from 2004/05 to 2007/08. In terms of percentage of total number of staff on substantiated and non-substantiated terms, there has been no significant change during the same period. Up to 2007/08, the majority of the staff of the eight institutions are still substantiated staff. Staff may lodge complaints if they feel that they have been unfairly treated, and as described above, all institutions have established mechanisms to follow-up on staff complaints.

(5) Redress Mechanisms of UGC funded institutions

17. All institutions are separate legal entities and they have established appeal and grievances mechanisms in place which are tailored to the particular circumstances of each institution. We believe that individual institutions are in the best position to handle complaints lodged by their staff. Furthermore, the Councils of the eight UGC-funded institutions all have lay members present. Therefore, there is already a degree of third-party oversight. We consider that the current arrangements are the most appropriate.

18. We have difficulty with the suggestion to establish an independent inter-institutional redress mechanism to deal with complaints from all the UGC-funded institutions. We are concerned about the mechanism's possible effect on institutional autonomy, as currently the authority and responsibility of handling complaints lie with the individual UGC-funded institutions themselves. We are also doubtful of the effectiveness of the proposed mechanism given that the policies and practices adopted by different institutions vary according to their respective role, mission and needs.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

University Grants Committee

Terms of Reference

1.1 The University Grants Committee of Hong Kong (UGC) is appointed by the Chief Executive of the HKSAR with the following terms of reference -

- (a) To keep under review in the light of the community's needs -
 - (i) the facilities in Hong Kong for education in universities, and such other institutions as may from time to time be designated by the Chief Executive;
 - (ii) such plans for development of such institutions as may be required from time to time;
 - (iii) the financial needs of education in such institutions; and
- (b) To advise Government -
 - (i) on the application of such funds as may be approved by the Legislature for education in such institutions; and
 - (ii) on such aspects of higher education which the Chief Executive may from time to time refer to the Committee.

Brief History

1.2 When the UGC was first established in 1965, the Committee was known as the University Grants Committee and was responsible for advising the Government on the development and funding of the then two institutions of higher education, namely The University of Hong Kong and The Chinese University of Hong Kong. It came into being as a result of suggestions, made by Members of the Legislative Council during the Budget Debate in 1964, that a committee similar to the British University Grants Committee should be set up in Hong Kong to advise the Government on the facilities, development and financial needs of the Universities. The Committee was formally appointed in October 1965, with principles and practices based on the British model. These principles have been adapted over the years to suit the needs of Hong Kong.

1.3 In 1972, the Committee was retitled the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee (UPGC), to reflect the inclusion of the then Hong Kong Polytechnic (now The Hong Kong Polytechnic University) within its purview. In

1983, the former Hong Kong Baptist College (now Hong Kong Baptist University) was brought within the ambit of the UPGC, followed in the next year by the then City Polytechnic of Hong Kong (now City University of Hong Kong) and in 1991, by The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and a former post-secondary college, Lingnan College (now Lingnan University). Following the adoption of university titles by the two Polytechnics and the Hong Kong Baptist College, the Committee reverted to its previous title of University Grants Committee in November 1994. In 1996, the new Hong Kong Institute of Education, formed by the merger of the four existing teacher training colleges and the Institute of Language in Education, came under the remit of the UGC.

1.4 At present, there are eight institutions of higher education which are funded through the UGC - City University of Hong Kong (CityU), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), Lingnan University (LU), The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and The University of Hong Kong (HKU).

Roles and Functions

1.5 The UGC has neither statutory nor executive powers. Each of the higher education institutions is an autonomous body with its own Ordinance and Governing Council. The institutions have substantial freedom in the control of curricula and academic standards, the selection of staff and students, initiation and acceptance of research, and the internal allocation of resources. Nevertheless, because the institutions are largely supported by public funds, and in view of the social, cultural and economic importance of higher education, the Government and the community at large have a legitimate interest in the operation of the institutions to ensure that they are providing the highest possible standards of education in the most cost-effective manner. The UGC seeks to maintain an appropriate balance in these matters.

1.6 The UGC seeks to promote responsible understanding between the institutions, the Government and the community at large. It mediates interests between institutions and the Administration. On the one hand, the UGC safeguards the academic freedom and institutional autonomy of the institutions, while on the other it ensures value for money for the taxpayers. The Committee has open channels to both the institutions and Government, since it offers advice to, and receives advice from, both.

1.7 The main function of the UGC is to allocate funding to its funded institutions, and to offer impartial expert advice to the Government on the strategic development and resource requirements of higher education in Hong Kong. Specifically, the Committee has to determine precise grant recommendations in the light of indications of the level of funding that can be made available, overall student number targets by level of study and year to meet community needs as agreed with the

Government, the breakdown of these numbers between institutions, as agreed in principle by the institutions. The Committee also provides the institutions with developmental and academic advice, having regard to international standards and practice. In respect of capital works projects, the UGC advises both institutions and the Government on campus development plans and proposals made by institutions, with a view to supporting their academic and overall development.

1.8 The Committee takes its role in quality assurance very seriously. To this effect, a number of peer reviews has been carried out in the past decade, e.g. Management Reviews, Teaching and Learning Quality Process Reviews, and Performance and Role-related Funding Scheme. It promotes and supports institutions in quality assurance and enhancement initiatives and processes, and monitors academic standards of the institutions, in accordance with their role. The UGC has recently decided to strengthen its role in quality assurance by establishing under its remit a Quality Assurance Council in 2007. In respect of research, the Committee also carries out Research Assessment Exercises¹ primarily to inform the distribution of the research portion of block grants, to discharge public accountability and to induce improvements in research.

1.9 To facilitate the further development of Hong Kong's higher education sector, the UGC adopts a strategic approach by developing an interlocking system whereby the whole higher education sector is viewed as one force, with each institution fulfilling a unique role, based on its strengths. There is a need for the UGC to play a proactive role in strategic planning and policy development to advise and steer the higher education sector in satisfying the diverse needs of stakeholders. To fulfil this role, the UGC ensures that at system level, appropriate tools, mechanisms and incentives are in place to assist institutions to perform at an internationally competitive level in their respective roles. The UGC has recently revised and updated its mission statement and this is at Annex 1A.

1.10 Members of the UGC are appointed by the Chief Executive in their personal capacity and all are prominent in their fields. A good portion of them are accomplished academics and higher education administrators from outside Hong Kong. The rest are local members, comprising eminent community leaders and academics of high standing. No Government officer sits on the Committee, but its Secretariat is staffed by civil servants.

Cycle of Meetings and Visits

1.11 The Committee normally meets three times a year in Hong Kong, and is supported by several standing Sub-Committees and Task Forces or Working Groups. The UGC main meetings are normally held in January, April and August and each

¹ The aim of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) is to determine the research index of a cost centre i.e. percentage of full-time equivalent researchers in each cost centre whose research work is judged to have reached or surpassed quality threshold.

lasts for about one week. Ad hoc groups and panels will be convened according to the tasks at hand.

1.12 In addition to regular and on-going agenda-based discussions and correspondence, members of the UGC and its sub-committees undertake formal and informal visits to the institutions periodically to gain first-hand knowledge of developments on the ground. These visits, which may be to institutions individually or to specific departments in a number of institutions, help the Committee to assess the quality of the education and the effectiveness of the resource allocation system of each institution.

Reports

1.13 The UGC normally publishes reports on its activities annually, i.e. "Facts and Figures". The publication is a bilingual public document distributed widely in the academic sector and is made available electronically. From time to time, the Committee submits reports to the Government on matters referred to it for advice.

Research Grants Council

Introduction

1.14 The Research Grants Council (RGC), which was established in 1991, operates under the aegis of the UGC and functions as a semi-autonomous advisory body on research matters within the organizational structure of the Committee. It works in close partnership with the UGC and advises and reports to the Government through the UGC on matters within its purview. The UGC Secretariat also serves as the Secretariat to RGC.

Terms of Reference

1.15 The terms of reference of the RGC are -

- (a) to advise the Government, through the UGC, on the needs of the institutions of higher education in Hong Kong in the field of academic research², including the identification of priority areas, in order that a research base adequate for the maintenance of academic vigour and pertinent to the needs of Hong Kong may be developed; and
- (b) to invite and receive, through the institutions of higher education, applications for research grants from academic staff and for the award of studentships and post-doctoral fellowships; to approve awards and other disbursements from funds made available by the Government through the UGC for research; to monitor the implementation of such grants and to report at least annually to the Government through the UGC.

² The RGC defines “research” in two main categories : “academic research” and “contract research” :

(a) Academic Research

- (i) basic research - research for the sake of advancing the frontiers of knowledge regardless of whether it would provide immediate benefit to mankind; and
- (ii) applied research - efforts directed at meeting certain functional requirements which involve the application of theories to specific areas or for specific purpose, and/or enhance man's existence in the short to medium term.

(b) Contract Research

Efforts which would lead to the delivery of a product or process and could involve both basic and applied research, though the latter is much more prevalent. Contract research is client-specific and is generally sponsored and financed by the client who can be either a private company or a public body or the Government.

Meetings

1.16 The RGC meets twice a year in Hong Kong, usually in December and June. The December meeting is devoted primarily to examination of annual reports on the institutions' research activities and preliminary consideration of applications for research grants. The June meeting is mainly concerned with the allocation of the Earmarked Research Grant (ERG). The Council also has a programme of visits to the institutions focusing on research projects funded by the ERG. The four subject panels under RGC normally meet prior to the RGC meetings, mainly to consider applications for allocations from the ERG as well as to monitor on-going projects and assess completed projects. The RGC's Sub-Committee(s) meets as and when required.

Visits

1.17 As part of the process of evaluating the institutions' research performance and capabilities, the RGC has a programme of visits to institutions during the meetings period in June each year. The main purpose of the visits is for RGC and panel members to -

- (a) familiarize themselves with the institutions' research activities, whether funded by UGC/RGC funds or otherwise and covering both academic and contract research;
- (b) see research facilities, equipment and projects, particularly those funded by the ERG, in situ;
- (c) be briefed in more detail on selected on-going or recently completed RGC-funded projects; and
- (d) meet and talk with academic staff and students about their research activities.

1.18 The visits are intended to provide opportunities for informal and open discussions at all levels, but are not intended to be fora for discussing resourcing either generally or for specific projects. Therefore, formality is kept to the minimum.

Annual Report

1.19 Each year, the RGC submits through the UGC an annual report on the work and allocation of research grants to the Government. The report is a bilingual, public document and is distributed widely within the academic and public sectors.

The Institutions

1.20 The eight higher education institutions funded through the UGC are statutorily autonomous corporations, each with its own Ordinance and Governing Council. They enjoy academic freedom and considerable institutional autonomy, subject to the constraints of financial dependence.

Institutional Autonomy

1.21 Institutional autonomy is a complex term, and the degree of autonomy required varies, but the essential point is that the institutions are legally entitled to freedom of action in managing their affairs within the restraints of the laws of Hong Kong. The claim for autonomy does not rest upon any assumption of special privileges, but upon the consideration (based on long experience) that the institutions can properly undertake the work expected of them by the community which supports them only if they have freedom of choice and of action. This does not exempt them from public interest and criticism, nor does it mean that their policies should not be under review by themselves, and by others.

1.22 The five main areas of institutional autonomy are -

(a) Selection of staff

The institutions have unfettered rights in the selection, promotion, and dismissal of their staff. In the case of appointment of the Head of the institution, however, the importance of the post is such that some degree of consultation with Government and community leaders is desirable and normal. Nevertheless, the institutions' Councils take the final decision, and make the formal appointment.

(b) Selection of students

Whatever may be the procedures for setting or controlling entrance examinations, or for setting total student number targets, or for setting student number intake targets, the institutions have unfettered rights in the selection or rejection of students presented as candidates for admission.

(c) Curricula and academic standards

The institutions will need to take into account the other developments and requirements in other fronts e.g. primary and secondary education, other further education facilities, requirements for practising certain professions, general or specific employment opportunities, etc. and these are areas in which the UGC and the Government also have interests. Moreover, some standards and qualifications can only be attained if appropriate finance is made available, and decisions may therefore be dependent on financial resources. Nevertheless, final decisions on their own curricula and standards rest with the institutions.

(d) Acceptance of research programmes

This includes the initiation of research programmes, subject to resources being available, as well as the acceptance of research proposed by others (for example, by the Government). In all cases, academic merit, the institution's role and community needs have to be given great weight but the institution is the only judge of whether its combined resources of people, accommodation, equipment and money can or should be deployed in the manner required.

(e) Allocation of funds within the institution

Apart from earmarked and indicated recurrent grants and earmarked capital grants, the institutions are free to allocate the funds available as they see fit. In practice, this freedom is considerably constrained by the fact that about three-quarters of institutional funds are committed to staff costs, which cannot easily or quickly be changed and that part of the remaining quarter is also committed for repairs, maintenance, services, supplies etc. Nevertheless, the institutions are free to make such changes as they can manage, to decide on specific allocations, to draw up budgets accordingly, and to change such budgets.

Roles and Missions

1.23 The institutions are diverse in character and in their contributions to the educational, cultural and economic development of Hong Kong. The differential roles of the institutions reflect their varying origins and the way they have been and are responding to the complex and evolving needs of Hong Kong. In the 2003/04 academic year, the UGC worked with the eight institutions to review their role statements and to make them more distinctive. At the same time, the UGC published a document: "Hong Kong Higher Education: To Make a Difference, To Move with the Times" which set out that the UGC took a strategic approach to the higher education sector by developing an interlocking system, in which each institution fulfils a unique role. Thus the roles of each institution should be diversified both in teaching and research, whilst each institution should also seek international competitiveness in its defined teaching and research areas. The revised role statements, which describe the different types of strengths or functions predominating in each institution, are at Annex 1B.

1.24 As a formative exercise and to assist institutions to find constructive ways to further improve and encourage performance in role, the UGC introduced the Performance and Role-related Funding Scheme in the 2005/06-2007/08 triennium. This important undertaking ties together funding allocation, performance and performance against role. One of the outcomes has been a move to evaluate more comprehensively than in the past the outcomes expected of different programmes.

1.25 In addition to role, another important ingredient to achieving an interlocking system is enhanced collaboration among institutions. In March 2004, the UGC published another important policy document, “Integration Matters”, outlining the UGC’s thinking in this area. Institutions are encouraged to commit to deep collaboration with other institutions to achieve synergy and critical mass for the whole sector. Institutional integration works best when driven by the parties themselves, and to generate sufficient momentum toward a new plane of activity, the UGC has established a Restructuring and Collaboration Fund.

1.26 A fuller discussion of this subject can be found in the Document: “Hong Kong Higher Education: To Make a Difference, To Move with the Times” at the UGC website: www.ugc.edu.hk.

University Grants Committee

New Mission Statement

The University Grants Committee (UGC) is the non-statutory body which advises the Government of the SAR on the funding and strategic development of higher education in Hong Kong. **In this role, the UGC works with Institutions, the Administration and the Community to promote excellence in the higher education sector, with a view to establishing Hong Kong as the education hub of the region and to nurturing high quality people to promote the economic and social development of Hong Kong.** The UGC will : -

- oversee the deployment of funds for the strategic development of the higher education sector;
- support the continuous development of the higher education sector to achieve greater impact and recognition, and as a source of innovation and ideas for the community;
- give steering advice to the higher education sector from a system perspective and facilitate institutions to fulfill their distinctive roles;
- enhance the student experience and advance the international competitiveness in teaching, research and knowledge transfer by institutions in accordance with their agreed roles;
- facilitate the sustainable development of higher education to meet the demands of the changing times;
- encourage deep collaboration among institutions to develop an interlocking system to increase international competitiveness of the sector; and
- safeguard quality and promote efficiency, cost-effectiveness and accountability in the activities of institutions.

In carrying out the above activities, UGC seeks to preserve institutional autonomy and academic freedom, in the context of appropriate financial and public accountability.

Role Statements of UGC-funded Institutions

City University of Hong Kong (CityU)

- (a) offers a range of professionally oriented programmes leading to the award of first degrees, and a small number of sub-degree programmes;
- (b) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (c) offers a number of taught postgraduate programmes and research postgraduate programmes in selected subject areas particularly in professional and applied fields;
- (d) emphasizes application-oriented teaching, professional education and applied research;
- (e) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength;
- (f) emphasizes high value-added educational programmes for whole person development and professional competencies and skills;
- (g) maintains strong links with business, industry, professional sectors, employers as well as the community;
- (h) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (i) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (j) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)

- (a) offers a range of programmes leading to the award of first degrees in Arts, Business, Chinese Medicine, Communication Studies, Education, Science and Social Sciences;
- (b) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (c) offers a number of taught postgraduate programmes and research postgraduate programmes in selected subject areas;
- (d) follows a holistic approach to higher education and emphasizes a broad-based creativity-inspiring undergraduate education, which inculcates in all who participate a sense of human values;
- (e) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength, and in particular in support of teaching;
- (f) maintains strong links with the community;
- (g) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (h) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (i) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

Lingnan University (LU)

- (a) offers a range of programmes leading to the award of first degrees in Arts, Business and Social Sciences;
- (b) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (c) offers a number of taught postgraduate programmes and research postgraduate programmes in selected fields within the subject areas of Arts, Business and Social Sciences;
- (d) provides a general education programme which seeks to offer all students a broad educational perspective, distinguished by the best liberal arts tradition from both East and West, and enables its students to act responsibly in the changing circumstances of this century;
- (e) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength, in particular in support of liberal arts programmes;
- (f) maintains strong links with the community;
- (g) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (h) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (i) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)

- (a) offers a range of programmes leading to the award of first degrees and postgraduate qualifications in subject areas including Arts, Science, Social Sciences and Business Administration;
- (b) incorporates professional schools such as Medicine, Architecture, Engineering and Education;
- (c) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (d) offers research postgraduate programmes for a significant number of students in selected subject areas;
- (e) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength;
- (f) contributes to the development of Hong Kong, China as a whole, and the region through quality education, research, engagement and service, in all the disciplines it offers;
- (g) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (h) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (i) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd)

- (a) offers a range of programmes leading to the award of certificates, first degrees and postgraduate diplomas, which provide suitable preparation for a career in education and teaching in the pre-school, school and vocational training sectors; and
- (b) also offers a series of programmes which provide professional education and development for serving teachers in these sectors;
- (c) nurtures through all its programmes knowledgeable, caring and responsible teachers who will serve the needs of Hong Kong schools;
- (d) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (e) delivers degree programmes relating to secondary education whenever possible through strategic collaborations with other local tertiary institutions;
- (f) provides a source of professional advice and development, and of research in education, as appropriate, to support the pre-school, school and vocational training sectors in Hong Kong;
- (g) maintains strong links with the community, and in particular the schools and the teaching profession;
- (h) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system; and
- (i) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)

- (a) offers a range of professionally oriented programmes leading to the award of first degrees, and a small number of sub-degree programmes;
- (b) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (c) offers a number of taught postgraduate programmes and research postgraduate programmes in selected subject areas particularly in professional and applied fields;
- (d) emphasizes application-oriented teaching, professional education and applied research;
- (e) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength;
- (f) emphasizes high value-added education, with a balanced approach leading to the development of all-round students with professional competence;
- (g) maintains strong links with business, industry, professional sectors, employers as well as the community;
- (h) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (i) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (j) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)

- (a) offers a range of programmes leading to the award of first degrees and postgraduate qualifications particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering, Management and Business Studies;
- (b) offers programmes in Humanities and Social Science only at a level sufficient to provide intellectual breadth, contextual background and communication skills to an otherwise scientific or technological curriculum, and limited postgraduate work;
- (c) incorporates professional schools, particularly in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Business;
- (d) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (e) offers research postgraduate programmes for a significant number of students in selected subject areas;
- (f) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength;
- (g) assists the economic and social development of Hong Kong by nurturing the scientific, technological, and entrepreneurial talents who will lead the transformation of traditional industries and fuel the growth of new high-value-added industries for the region;
- (h) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (i) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (j) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

The University of Hong Kong (HKU)

- (a) offers a range of programmes leading to the award of first degrees and postgraduate qualifications in subject areas including Arts, Science, Social Sciences, and Business and Economics;
- (b) incorporates professional schools such as Medicine, Dentistry, Architecture, Education, Engineering and Law;
- (c) pursues the delivery of teaching at an internationally competitive level in all the taught programmes that it offers;
- (d) offers research postgraduate programmes for a significant number of students in selected subject areas;
- (e) aims at being internationally competitive in its areas of research strength;
- (f) as an English-medium University, supports a knowledge-based society and economy through its engagement in cutting-edge research, pedagogical developments, and lifelong learning; in particular, emphasizes whole person education and interdisciplinarity;
- (g) pursues actively deep collaboration in its areas of strength with other higher education institutions in Hong Kong or the region or more widely so as to enhance the Hong Kong higher education system;
- (h) encourages academic staff to be engaged in public service, consultancy and collaborative work with the private sector in areas where they have special expertise, as part of the institution's general collaboration with government, business and industry; and
- (i) manages in the most effective and efficient way the public and private resources bestowed upon the institution, employing collaboration whenever it is of value.

Membership of University Grants Committee
(As at 1 April 2007)**Name****Title****Chairman**

The Hon. CHA, May Lung Laura, SBS, JP	Non-executive Deputy Chairman, The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited Chairman, General Affairs and Management Sub-Committee
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Members

Mrs CHAN WONG Shui, Pamela, BBS, JP	Former Chief Executive, Consumer Council
Mr Philip CHEN Nan-lok, SBS, JP	Chairman, John Swire & Sons (China) Limited
Dr CHEUNG Man-biu, Robin	Principal, Tsung Tsin College, HK
Professor Roland CHIN Tai-hong	Vice-President for Academic Affairs (Acting), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, HK
Dr Judith EATON	President, Council of Higher Education Accreditation, USA
Professor Willard FEE	Edward C. and Amy H. Sewall Professor of Otolaryngology / Head and Neck Surgery, Stanford University Medical Centre, USA
Professor Malcolm GRANT	President and Provost of University College London, United Kingdom
Professor HU Dong-cheng	Vice Chairman, University Council, Tsinghua University, China
Professor Edmond KO, JP	Adjunct Professor of Chemical Engineering, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, HK
Mr Irving KOO Yee-yin, SBS, JP	Managing Director, Trion Pacific Limited, HK
Professor LAU Yu-lung	Chair Professor and Head of Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, HK
Professor LEUNG Ping-chung, SBS, OBE, JP	Director, Institute of Chinese Medicine, HK Director, Jockey Club Centre for Osteoporosis Care & Control, HK Professor Emeritus, Orthopaedics & Traumatology, HK

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
Sir Colin LUCAS	The Warden, Rhodes House, UK Former Vice Chancellor, Oxford University
Professor John NILAND, AC	President Emeritus, University of New South Wales, Australia Former Vice-Chancellor and President, University of New South Wales (1992-2002), Australia
Mr Martin TANG	Chairman, Asia, Spencer Stuart and Associates (Hong Kong) Ltd, HK
Professor WANG Sheng-hong	President, Fudan University, China
Professor WEE Chow Hou, PhD, BBM, PPA, FCIM	Professor and Head Division of Strategy, Management & Organisation, Chairman, Nanyang Executive Programmes, Nanyang Business School, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Dr WONG Chung-kiu	Chief Executive Officer, iASPEC Services Limited, HK
Mr Peter WONG Tung-shun, JP	Executive Director, Hong Kong and Mainland China, The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, HK
Professor WONG Yuk-shan, PhD, FIBiol, BBS, JP	Vice-President for Administration and Business, Professor of Biology, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, HK
Dr. YEOH Eng-kiong, GBS, JP	Professor of Public Health, School of Public Health, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, HK
Dr Alice LAM, GBS, JP (Ex-officio member)	Chairman of Quality Assurance Council

Chapter 10 - Communications and Correspondence

Introduction

10.1 The UGC (and the UGC Secretariat) is the principal channel of communication between the Government and the UGC-funded institutions. The UGC communicates with the Government mainly through the Education & Manpower Bureau (EMB). The Secretariat, as a Government department, comes under the policy and housekeeping responsibility of the EMB. The Secretary-General and Secretariat staff are, however, responsible both to the UGC and the Secretary for Education & Manpower (SEM).

10.2 Direct formal contacts between the institutions and the Government are normally limited to the following areas -

- (a) legislative matters regarding the institutions' ordinances;
- (b) performing functions and exercising powers as provided for in the institutions' ordinances;
- (c) land matters;
- (d) contracts for services rendered; and
- (e) course/programme (other than the ones which are totally self-financed) commissioning.

In all these areas, however, the UGC should be kept informed by copying correspondence and should, when appropriate, be consulted before final decisions are taken, particularly on matters which are likely to have funding implications for the institutions.

10.3 Government Secretariat Bureaux and Departments may have specific requests for the institutions to provide academic courses or training to meet specific manpower needs, and they may discuss possibilities for such courses or training informally with individual institutions. However, any formal request for the introduction of an academic course or a training programme which affect UGC student number targets may only be made to SEM in the first instance, and should be copied to the UGC Secretariat and the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau. SEM shall then decide whether such request should be formally conveyed to the UGC.

10.4 Informal contacts, sounding-out sessions, exchanges of information, etc. between individuals or groups in the institutions and Government officers, on a wide range of subjects, are of course inevitable and acceptable. It is, however, essential to

recognise in good time whether these are likely to become formal, because at that point the UGC must be brought in. In case of doubt, it is always preferable to err on the side of caution and involve the UGC sooner rather than later.

10.5 When engaged in informal discussions, it is important that both sides should recognise the extent to which they differ in respect of formal responsibilities. A Government officer normally has a clear idea of how far his responsibilities extend, how far he has to refer to senior officers (and to which senior officers), and what their reactions are likely to be. He is required to assess these factors, and normally does so, independently of his personal views; but it is difficult, in informal discussions, to keep personal views wholly to one side. There is therefore a danger of the institution person misreading the Government officer's apparent views and subsequently being surprised by the more formal outcome.

10.6 The likelihood of this happening is increased by the fact that the institution person may not have, in the Government sense, a senior officer able directly to confirm or overrule a decision; and even where this is so, personal views and commitments may play a bigger part. Plans or ideas in an institution have to be developed in the context of internal institutional politics, and the personal opinion and personal standing of their sponsors play a relatively large part in their success or failure. These factors cannot, of course, be excluded from Government decision making, but they have a different balance. It is not uncommon for Government officers to be surprised by finding views expressed to them with apparent authority by an institution person subsequently being seriously modified, or even overturned in Senate, Academic Board or Council decisions.

10.7 Furthermore, it must be recognised that the UGC, as an independent advisory body, may take a different position from both parties. It cannot therefore safely be assumed that the UGC will automatically support either party. In these circumstances, it is essential to follow the guidelines in GR 760 - 762, and outlined in paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 above, regarding formal contacts between the institutions and Government.

Incoming Correspondence

10.8 Official correspondence addressed to the Chairman of the UGC should normally be addressed to him c/o UGC Secretariat. Since such correspondence will be opened by staff of the UGC Secretariat first, before submission to the Chairman with comments/ recommendations for action as appropriate, correspondence intended for the Chairman's eyes only should either be addressed to him at his private office or clearly marked "Personal and Confidential" (or both). In the case of letters addressed to the Chairman at the UGC Secretariat, a photocopy goes to the Chairman while the original is retained for filing.

10.9 All other correspondence to the UGC should be addressed to the Secretariat. The decision whether to use a formal or informal mode of address rests entirely with the Government officer or institution officer concerned. The UGC Secretariat is a Government office and all correspondence normally goes on official files. It will therefore be dealt with regardless of how it is addressed, although letters addressed personally to the Secretary-General or other Secretariat officers (either by title or by name) will be seen by the officer concerned personally first.

10.10 If the correspondence is intended for distribution to members, then it is convenient if sufficient copies are provided. The number of required copies will normally be specified by a letter calling for such documents. Every effort will be made to keep the number to a minimum. This is however only essential if large reports or similar documents are intended for circulation to members. This requirement will usually have been specified in the letters calling for such reports. (Submission of annual CDCF data returns is dealt with in Chapter 8)

Electronic Mail

10.11 The UGC Secretariat may be contacted via e-mail for purposes of informal communications and exchanges of views/information. The e-mail addresses of Secretariat staff will be separately notified to the institutions and Government Bureaux/Departments as required. Formal correspondence should, however, be sent to the Secretariat by mail or fax, unless specifically stated otherwise.

UGC Website

10.12 The UGC also disseminates information through its web site www.ugc.edu.hk. The UGC web which is in both English and Chinese is updated regularly and contains the following types of information -

- About the UGC
- Terms of Reference
- Committee Structure
- UGC Secretariat
- UGC Policy
- UGC Activities
- Statistics
- Related Sites
- UGC-funded Institutions
- Higher Education Forum
- About the RGC

Contact List

10.13 The UGC Secretariat has produced, in consultation with the institutions, a contact list of UGC Secretariat and UGC-funded institutions by subject and by institution. The list is distributed among the UGC Secretariat and the institutions. It is updated regularly by the UGC Secretariat based on the information provided by the institutions.