

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)766/07-08(04)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 14 January 2008**

Scholarships for non-local students

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the provision of scholarships for non-local students attending local undergraduate programmes, and summarizes members' concerns on the subject.

Background

Private scholarships for Mainland students

2. In 1998, with the support of the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) Charities Trust, the Administration launched a three-year pilot scheme to recruit a total of 450 outstanding Mainland students to attend undergraduate programmes in the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions. Each of the scholarship awardees received an annual allowance of about \$100,000 for each of the three years of undergraduate studies in Hong Kong, which covered their tuition fees and living expenses. The Mainland students underwent a one-year preparatory programme in relevant subjects such as English, Cantonese and information technology and communication skills prior to the commencement of their undergraduate studies in Hong Kong. The preparatory year's study was funded by the institutions themselves.

3. As the Mainland students could provide positive stimuli to the local students, and in view of its success, the HKJC Charities Trust extended the scheme for one more year, although the original idea was that following the lead of the HKJC Charities Trust, the scheme would be taken over by other sponsors. The extended scheme admitted an additional batch of 100 Mainland students in the 2002-2003 academic year. In parallel, the Administration had also secured a one-off donation

from the K K Ho International Foundation for the UGC-funded institutions to admit another batch of 66 Mainland students in the same academic year on comparable terms.

Government scholarships for Mainland students

4. To enable the UGC-funded institutions to sustain the momentum initiated by the scholarship schemes offered by the HKJC Charities Trust and the K K Ho International Foundation, the Administration, with the approval of the Finance Committee in March 2002, set aside a total of \$90 million to support the continuation of the scholarship scheme for outstanding Mainland students to attend undergraduate programmes at the UGC-funded institutions (the Scholarship Scheme). Of this amount, \$45 million was granted in 2003-2004 for sponsoring the batch of students admitted in the same year. The remaining \$45 million was granted in the subsequent financial years, subject to the availability of matching private donations/sponsorship. Under the Scholarship Scheme, three batches each of 150 outstanding Mainland students were admitted to the UGC-funded institutions for undergraduate study from the 2003-2004 to 2005-2006 academic years.

Scholarships under the Matching Grant Schemes for the UGC-funded institutions

5. To encourage investment in education by the community and to help internationalization of the student body in the higher education sector, the Administration has, since the Second Matching Grant Scheme launched in August 2005, allowed the UGC-funded institutions to use the matching grants for private donations secured by them to offer scholarships for meritorious non-local students. All scholarships provided under the matching grants are offered by the institutions to the students direct and administered by the institutions. The total amount of matching grants allocated under the Second, Third and Fourth Matching Grant Schemes is \$1 billion respectively.

Members' concerns

6. The Panel on Education had discussed the Scholarship Scheme and each of the Matching Grant Schemes before the Administration submitted its proposals to the Finance Committee for consideration. Questions concerning scholarships for non-local students had also been raised during the scrutiny of the Estimates of Expenditure of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the past few years. Members supported the granting of scholarships for non-local students, although they had raised a number of concerns, a summary of which is set out below.

Expansion of the Scholarship Scheme

7. As the Scholarship Scheme covered only three batches of 150 outstanding Mainland students, members had enquired about the viability of expanding it to attract more outstanding Mainland students to study in Hong Kong.

8. According to the Administration, the purpose of the Scholarship Scheme was to sustain the very worthwhile scholarship schemes offered by the HKJC Charities Trust and the K K Ho International Foundation when the two schemes ended in the 2002-2003 academic year, and to allow more time for the UGC-sector to find alternative, longer-term funding arrangements. Since institutions should be able to find scholarships with private funds upon the expiry of the time-limited Scholarship Scheme by way of initiatives such as raising more private funding through the Matching Grant Schemes, the Administration did not consider it necessary to inject more money into the Scholarship Scheme.

Distribution of scholarship awardees

Under the Matching Grant Schemes

9. Members noted that almost 90% of the non-local student population in the higher education sector was Mainland students. Queries had been raised as to whether this high proportion of Mainland students ran contrary to the original intent of promoting internationalism by the award of scholarships for meritorious non-local students.

10. The Administration did not agree that the granting of scholarships to Mainland students ran contrary to the original intent of promoting internationalism. In the Administration's view, Mainland students were very bright and motivated, and their interaction with local students was beneficial. UGC had to respect the autonomy of institutions and would not interfere with their recruitment of students nor award of scholarships.

Under the Scholarship Scheme

11. Members had sought information on the details of the Scholarship Scheme including the number of Mainland students admitted to the UGC-funded institutions, the institutions/programmes attended by the students and the average amount of scholarship received.

12. According to the Administration, in the 2003-2004, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic years, 148, 114 and 99 Mainland students were admitted respectively to the UGC-funded institutions under the Scholarship Scheme. The number of scholarship recipients at each institution, broken down by broad academic categories of studies, is in **Appendix I**.

13. The average amount paid out to the UGC-funded institutions for release of scholarships to the Mainland students was \$100,000 for each of the three years of undergraduate studies for students admitted in the 2003-2004 academic year; and \$50,000 for students admitted in the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic years. The amount of scholarships in the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic years was matched by an equivalent amount of private donations and sponsorship secured by the UGC-funded institutions.

Quota for the provision of scholarships

14. Members were concerned whether the relaxation to allow the use of the matching grants to offer scholarships for meritorious non-local students would affect the award of scholarships to their local counterparts. There was a suggestion that a quota should be set for the provision of scholarships for non-local students.

15. The Administration had explained that the enrolment of non-local students in the UGC-funded institutions was restricted to not more than 10% of the total publicly-funded places. Non-local students who were awarded with scholarships funded by private donations or matching grants would be included in the 10% quota.

Latest development

16. In his 2007-2008 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced a package of proposals to further develop Hong Kong into a regional education hub. Among others, a \$1 billion scholarship endowment fund will be established to provide scholarships to outstanding local and non-local students attending full-time and publicly-funded programmes at degree or above levels.

Relevant papers

17. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix II**.

Appendix I

Total number of students admitted to the UGC-funded Institutions under the Scholarship Scheme for outstanding Mainland Students

Institution	Medicine, Dentistry & Health	Sciences	Engineering & Technology	Business & Management	Social Sciences	Arts & Humanities	Education	Total No. of students
City University of Hong Kong		13	13	34	2	8		70
Hong Kong Baptist University	2	14		7	6			29
Lingnan University				3	2	2		7
The Chinese University of Hong Kong		19	16	31	22	1		89
The Hong Kong Institute of Education							5	5
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University		20	9	3		16		48
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology		12	7	10				29
The University of Hong Kong	2	31	6	26	13	6		84
Total	4	109	51	114	45	33	5	361

Relevant papers on scholarships for non-local students

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	1.3.2002 (Item II)	Minutes Agenda
Finance Committee	8.3.2002	Minutes FCR(2001-02)68
Finance Committee	1.4.2004	Administration's replies to Members initial written questions (Reply Serial Nos. EMB106, EMB120 and EMB122)
Finance Committee	12.4.2005	Administration's replies to Members initial written questions (Reply Serial No. EMB132)
Panel on Education	20.6.2005 (Item I)	Minutes Agenda CB(2)2215/04-05(01)
Finance Committee	8.7.2005	Minutes FCR(2005-06)26 FC116/04-05 CB(2)795/05-06(01)
Finance Committee	14.3.2006	Administration's replies to Members initial written questions (Reply Serial Nos. EMB159, EMB172 and EMB178)
Panel on Education	8.5.2006 (Item IV)	Minutes Agenda CB(2)2382/05-06(01)
Legislative Council	21.6.2006	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 127 - 194 (Motion)
Finance Committee	20.3.2007	Administration's replies to Members initial written questions (Reply Serial Nos. EMB015 and EMB205)
Panel on Education	18.10.2007 (Item I)	Agenda