

For information
on 14 March 2011

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Report on the Higher Education Review 2010

This paper informs Members of the background and the way forward relating to the University Grants Committee (UGC)'s report "Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong" on the Higher Education Review 2010.

Background

2. The Report of the Higher Education Review 2002 suggested the UGC conduct a further review in five years' time. The UGC formed the Higher Education Review Group (HERG) under the convenorship of Sir Colin Lucas, former Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University and a long-serving UGC Member, to take forward the review in early 2009. The membership list of HERG is in Annex A.

3. The HERG was commissioned to review progress made on the recommendations of the Higher Education Review 2002, having regard to the present higher education landscape in Hong Kong. It also attempted to identify new issues facing Hong Kong's higher education sector and to discern world trends with a view to recommending strategies for the future development of Hong Kong's higher education sector, with particular emphasis on –

- (a) vision and role of higher education in Hong Kong;
- (b) the demand for and provision of higher education opportunities and the increase in the diversity of higher education;
- (c) quality assurance for higher education;
- (d) research support strategy and research funding mechanism;
- (e) relationships and collaboration among providers of higher education from a system perspective;

- (f) the position of higher education in Hong Kong in the context of globalisation and the value of internationalisation generally, and the rapid development of higher education in Mainland China and the region specifically; and
- (g) other matters that are relevant to the main purpose of the review.

4. HERG had consulted relevant stakeholders in drafting the report. Written views were received from more than 30 organisations and individuals. Individual face-to-face discussions were held with the key stakeholders in the sector, including the heads of institutions (both public and private, degree and sub-degree) and heads of quality assurance bodies. The Group also organised two rounds of consultations in September 2009 and April 2010 for stakeholders, including staff and students in the sector.

5. The UGC submitted the report to the Education Bureau (EDB), and simultaneously released to the public in December 2010. A list of the recommendations is set out in Annex B.

Way Forward

6. Upon receipt of the report, we have written to UGC-funded institutions (including their self-financing arms), other publicly-funded institutions, self-financing post-secondary institutions and the three quality assurance bodies to solicit their views on the recommendations of the report. We also organised two consultation forums for staff and students of all local post-secondary institutions on 1 and 3 March 2011 respectively. Around 340 persons attended the two forums.

7. The recommendations put forward by UGC will have far-reaching implications on the future development of the higher education sector. We will study and examine the recommendations in the report and the views collected from stakeholders in the post-secondary education sector in detail. We intend to come to a view for implementation within this year and will report to the Panel on Education again. In the mean time, we continue to welcome views on the report, which can be sent to her_comments@edb.gov.hk.

8. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Education Bureau
March 2011

Membership List

Convenor

Sir Colin LUCAS
Chairman, British Library, United Kingdom
(Until 1 September 2010)

Former Vice-Chancellor, Oxford University,
United Kingdom

Members

Professor Glyn DAVIS,
AC
Vice-Chancellor, University of Melbourne,
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Professor John MALPAS
Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President,
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Non-official Member, Executive Council, Hong
Kong Special Administrative Region Government

Non-executive Deputy Chairman,
The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking
Corporation Limited, Hong Kong

Mr Michael V STONE, JP
Secretary-General, UGC

Secretary

Mrs Dorothy MA
Deputy Secretary-General (1), UGC

**List of Recommendations in UGC's Report:
Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong**

1. Government policy should treat all elements of post-secondary educational provision as a single interlocking system for strategic and planning purposes, including both privately and publicly funded institutions.
2. There should be a single oversight body for the non-publicly funded part of the post-secondary education system.
3. There should be a clear differentiation of roles throughout the post-secondary education system to ensure full diversity of provision.
4. There should be greater clarity about the character of the Associate Degree and its place in the structure of the qualifications offered by the post-secondary education system.
5. Pathways for student progression through the whole post-secondary system and between its parts should be made clearer, including for those returning to education at different times.
6. A transparent and trustworthy Credit Accumulation and Transfer System should be developed for the whole post-secondary system.
7. Manpower planning requirements in the allocation of first-year, first-degree places should be abolished or considerably loosened.
8. There should be a comprehensive review of the future provision and distribution of lifelong learning opportunities throughout the post-secondary system.
9. UGC-funded institutions should review, develop where necessary and implement internationalisation strategies as a matter of urgency. The UGC should monitor agreed Key Performance Indicators in each institution. The Government should adopt a strategy for internationalisation that includes collaboration with universities. Both should make long-term and sustained commitments to these strategies.
10. A forum should be established to facilitate collaboration between the Government, universities and the UGC in identifying and implementing effective policies and initiatives, and for spreading best practices regarding internationalisation.
11. An additional funding stream should be attributed to the UGC to fund internationalisation initiatives and allocated through the Academic Development Planning process.

12. Universities should develop appropriate strategies for the recruitment of international students. The Government should actively support this through its official overseas offices.
13. The Government, working with the institutions, should increase hostel accommodation for local and non-local students as a matter of urgency.
14. UGC-funded institutions should increase their efforts to provide support resources and opportunities for non-local students to integrate them better with the local student body.
15. The number and variety of overseas study opportunities for local students should be increased significantly. Funding should be provided for this, and credits should be attached to these programmes.
16. Institutions should make renewed efforts to ensure and enhance students' biliterate (Chinese and English) and trilingual (Cantonese, Putonghua and English) abilities.
17. UGC-funded institutions should actively maintain the international mix of their faculty.
18. The higher education sector should develop a number of jointly funded and staffed international centres for high quality research and graduate programmes combining Asian and Western perspectives.
19. Institutions should establish a clear strategy for developing different types of relationships with the Mainland, and in particular the Pearl River Delta.
20. The Government should initiate negotiations with relevant authorities on the Mainland with a view to easing regulatory requirements in teaching and research collaboration with Mainland institutions, especially the portability of research funding.
21. The UGC should ensure that it uses the tools at its disposal to assess and reward evidence of teaching excellence, both at the system level and at the funding level. Sector-wide surveys and assessments of student learning outcomes should be developed and published.
22. UGC-funded institutions should place as much emphasis on the assessment of competence in teaching as they do on research. They should collectively consider the establishment of communities of practice to promote sector-wide collaboration on teaching and learning issues.
23. UGC-funded institutions should seek to adopt the approaches outlined in the Review for the improvement of teaching and learning in areas related to faculty development and the strengthening of the teaching-research nexus. They should report on their implementation no later than 2015.

24. The Government should further develop its R&D policy and ensure that it dovetails more effectively with the four pillar and six new industries identified by the Government for targeted development.
25. Research funding and resources should be allocated increasingly on a competitive basis.
26. The access of private universities to competitive research funding should be reviewed periodically.
27. There should continue to be role differentiation between UGC-funded institutions to ensure the best deployment of public resources.
28. The funding regime should assess and reinforce role differentiation and performance in role within the UGC-funded sector.
29. The UGC should transition to a funding regime based on the assessed quality of outputs and outcomes, reducing the current regulatory burden.
30. The funding regime should reflect high-quality teaching outcomes.
31. A thorough review of the practical effectiveness of the periodic Research Assessment Exercise should be undertaken before it is held again.
32. Means of assessing the quality of research postgraduate students emerging from the system should be implemented to inform decisions on the allocation of research postgraduate places.
33. Public funds should not be used by UGC-funded institutions as cross-subsidies for self-financing educational activities. There should be greater transparency in the financial relationship between UGC-funded institutions and self-financing courses either within the institution or in an affiliate, such as a community college.
34. The community college operations of UGC-funded institutions should be completely separated from their parent institutions within three years of the acceptance of this recommendation.
35. There should be a single quality assurance body for the whole post-secondary system.
36. The single body should integrate the methods and approaches of quality assessment, validation and accreditation across the system.
37. The development of a Credit Accumulation and Transfer System for the whole system requires it to be appropriate for articulation between different levels and across different institutions at the same level.
38. There should be greater transparency and public disclosure of quality assessment so that the public may make better-informed choices over time.

39. A coordinating committee comprising the chairpersons of the various oversight bodies in the post-secondary education sector should be established under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Education.
40. The Education Bureau should be provided with appropriate and sufficient human/financial resources to allow it to fulfil an expanded role in overseeing the whole post-secondary sector.