



本局檔號 Our Ref
來函檔號 Your Ref

(By fax and post)

17 May 2012

Ms. Miranda Hon
Clerk
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms. Hon,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the results of value for money audits
(Report No. 58) – Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and
Vocational Qualifications (“HKCAAVQ”) (Chapter 2)**

I refer to your letter dated 3 May 2012, and am pleased to provide the answers to your questions as follows. As requested, the Chinese translation of our response is also enclosed for your reference.

Question

- (a) It was stated in paragraph 4.8 of the Audit Report that the Audit Commission (“Audit”) reviewed 10 notifications assessed by the HKCAAVQ in the period 2008-09 to 2011-12 (up to Oct 2011), and found that for 3 cases, there were delays by the operators in notifying the Education Bureau of the changes in the course registration details, with the delay ranging from 4 months to 8 years. The Committee would like to know whether students who had enrolled in those registered courses had been affected, including the number of students affected and details of the impact on them.

Response

In response to (a), we wish to clarify that, under the current system, a non-local course to be offered and taught in Hong Kong is required to be

registered on the Non-Local Higher and Professional Education Course Register maintained by the Registrar of Non-local Higher and Professional Education Courses (“Registrar”) of the Education Bureau. Before such a non-local course is registered, the Registrar will usually seek advice from the HKCAAVQ which would assess whether the course has met the registration criteria under the Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance (Cap 493) (“the Ordinance”). Amongst such criteria, one important aspect is that the non-local course offered and taught in Hong Kong must be of comparable standard as that in the home course offered and taught by the overseas institution. After registration, the operator is required under Section 19 of the Ordinance to notify the Registrar within one month about any change in the course. Upon such notification, the HKCAAVQ is normally requested to advise the Registrar whether the change affects the meeting of the registration criteria of the course. The Registrar is the ultimate authority to determine whether the change affects the meeting of registration criteria of the course.

The changes at issue were initiated by the overseas institutions offering the non-local courses in Hong Kong. When the HKCAAVQ conducted assessments and asked the institutions about the changes, the institutions provided documentary evidence to confirm that the same changes took place in the comparable home courses. As a result, the Registrar was advised by the HKCAAVQ that the changes would not affect the meeting of the registration criteria of the courses in all the three cases. According to our information, 221 students were involved in the three cases.

Question

(b) Audit found that out of the 327 assessments completed by the HKCAAVQ on CEF courses in the period April 2008 to August 2011, 131 assessments had taken more than 8 weeks to complete, and the average delay was about 6 weeks. The Committee would like to know whether students who had enrolled in the CEF courses concerned had been affected, including the number of students affected and details of the impact on them.

Response

In response to (b), we would like to clarify that a course provider cannot promote its course as registered under Continuing Education Fund (“CEF”) or enroll students who seek to obtain CEF subsidy before the course has gone through the assessment of HKCAAVQ and received the approval of the Labour and Welfare Bureau for CEF registration. Therefore, the time

required by HKCAAVQ for course assessment will not directly affect any enrolled CEF learners.

That said, in order to benefit the potential CEF learners who seek to enroll in CEF reimbursable courses with wider choices, HKCAAVQ has in fact streamlined the assessment process, substantially shortening the average assessment time to 6.7 weeks for the course applications received during the period between April 2011 and mid-January 2012 as mentioned in our response to the audit recommendation.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Yiu-Kwan Fan
Executive Director

Enclosure

YK/DL/dl

c.c. Mr. Martin Liao, Chairman, HKCAAVQ
Mr. Michael Suen, Secretary for Education, Education Bureau
Ms. Michelle Li, Deputy Secretary (Ed) 1, Further and Higher
Education Branch, Education Bureau