
INFORMATION NOTE

Surplus generated by the University Grants Committee-funded institutions from self-financing programmes

1. Background

1.1 The large amount of surplus generated by the eight University Grants Committee-funded ("UGC-funded") institutions¹ from their self-financing programmes has aroused public concern. In his written question raised at the Council meeting of 7 December 2011, Hon Cheung Man-kwong required the Administration to provide information, among others, on the surplus arising from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions. Subsequently, members deliberated on this subject matter at the Panel on Education ("Panel") meetings held on 12 December 2011 and 9 January 2012.

1.2 The Panel has scheduled to further discuss this subject matter at the meeting to be held on 20 April 2012. To facilitate members' discussion, this information note provides some basic information on the surplus generated by UGC-funded institutions from self-financing programmes², and summarizes the deliberations of the Panel.

¹ They are City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Lingnan University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and The University of Hong Kong.

² The information is compiled by individual institutions using their own accounting guidelines and systems, and hence the figures reported by different institutions may not be directly comparable. The comparison made in this Information Note is to give the Panel a general interpretation of the statistics concerned. The figures used in this Note are sourced from the *Official Records of Proceedings of the Legislative Council (2011)*.

2. Number and actual intakes of self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions

2.1 The number of self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions (including their affiliates) and the corresponding actual intakes between 2008-2009³ and 2010-2011 are set out in **Table 1**. For full-time sub-degree programmes, the number of intakes increased from 12 234 in 2008-2009 to 15 101 in 2009-2010 and further to 18 264 in 2010-2011. The full-time undergraduate programmes exhibited a similar up-trend, with the intakes of 1 286 in 2008-2009, 2 048 in 2009-2010 and 2 336 in 2010-2011. For the self-financing taught postgraduate programmes offered in 2010-2011, the number of intakes were 18 163 (**Table 2**), similar to that of full-time sub-degree programmes in the same academic year.

2.2 In sum, the self-financing programmes constitute an important part of Hong Kong's post-secondary education system. For example, the number of intakes of the three types of self-financing programmes totalled 38 763 in 2010-2011.

³ The figures quoted in this information note are academic year figures.

Table 1 – The number and actual intakes of self-financing sub-degree and undergraduate programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions

| Full-time sub-degree programmes⁽¹⁾ | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Institution | 2008-2009 | | 2009-2010 | | 2010-2011 | |
| | Programmes | Intakes | Programmes | Intakes | Programmes | Intakes |
| City University of Hong Kong | 40 | 3 530 | 43 | 3 945 | 40 | 4 249 |
| Hong Kong Baptist University | 19 | 1 153 | 22 | 1 608 | 24 | 2 513 |
| Lingnan University | 21 | 760 | 29 | 1 110 | 31 | 1 829 |
| The Chinese University of Hong Kong | 22 | 1 107 | 23 | 1 216 | 26 | 1 597 |
| The Hong Kong Institute of Education | 8 | 214 | 9 | 289 | 7 | 445 |
| The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | 34 | 2 861 | 37 | 4 137 | 36 | 4 201 |
| The University of Hong Kong | 30 | 2 609 | 27 | 2 796 | 29 | 3 430 |
| Total | 174 | 12 234 | 190 | 15 101 | 193 | 18 264 |
| Full-time undergraduate programmes⁽²⁾ | | | | | | |
| Institution | 2008-2009 | | 2009-2010 | | 2010-2011 | |
| | Programmes | Intakes | Programmes | Intakes | Programmes | Intakes |
| First year intake: | | | | | | |
| City University of Hong Kong | 3 | 25 | – | – | – | – |
| The Hong Kong Institute of Education | 1 | 34 | 1 | 33 | 1 | 41 |
| The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | 1 | 18 | 1 | 11 | – | – |
| Sub-total | 5 | 77 | 2 | 44 | 1 | 41 |
| Senior year intake/Top-up degree: | | | | | | |
| City University of Hong Kong | 4 | 202 | 4 | 255 | 5 | 346 |
| Hong Kong Baptist University | 3 | 215 | 6 | 451 | 7 | 494 |
| Lingnan University | 9 | 29 | 9 | 59 | 9 | 40 |
| The Hong Kong Institute of Education | – | – | – | – | 1 | 24 |
| The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | 15 | 763 | 16 | 1 239 | 17 | 1 391 |
| Sub-total | 31 | 1 209 | 35 | 2 004 | 39 | 2 295 |
| Total | 36 | 1 286 | 37 | 2 048 | 40 | 2 336 |

Notes: (1) Figures of part-time programmes are not available. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology did not offer such programme.

(2) Figures of part-time programmes are not available. The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology did not offer such programme.

Source: *Official Records of Proceedings of the Legislative Council* (2011).

Table 2 – The number and actual intakes of self-financing taught postgraduate programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions in 2010-2011⁽¹⁾

| Institution | Number of programmes⁽²⁾ | Intakes |
|--|---|----------------|
| City University of Hong Kong | 57 | 2 650 |
| Hong Kong Baptist University | 34 | 1 493 |
| Lingnan University | 7 | 287 |
| The Chinese University of Hong Kong | 113 | 4 713 |
| The Hong Kong Institute of Education | 6 | 443 |
| The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | 79 | 3 457 |
| The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | 26 | 1 365 |
| The University of Hong Kong | 112 | 3 755 |
| Total | 434 | 18 163 |

Notes: (1) The data for the academic years before 2010-2011 are not available.

(2) If an institution offers a programme with both full-time and part-time modes of study available, the programme will be counted once only.

Source: *Official Records of Proceedings of the Legislative Council* (2011).

3. Tuition fee income from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions

3.1 **Table 3** shows the tuition fee income from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions proper, community colleges and other self-financed education arms. Analyzed by the programmes offered by institution proper, The Chinese University of Hong Kong led the other UGC-funded institutions in terms of receiving HK\$732 million of tuition fee income in 2010-2011, followed by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HK\$582 million) and The University of Hong Kong (HK\$438 million). For the programmes offered by other self-financed education arms, The University of Hong Kong led the pack and received HK\$739 million in 2010-2011 (or accounting for about 60% of the market share).

Table 3 – Tuition fee income from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions proper, community colleges and other self-financed education arms (HK\$ million)

| | City University of Hong Kong | | | Hong Kong Baptist University | | | Lingnan University | | | The Chinese University of Hong Kong ⁽¹⁾ | | | The Hong Kong Institute of Education ⁽²⁾ | | | The Hong Kong Polytechnic University ⁽³⁾ | | | The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | | | The University of Hong Kong | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|--|------------|------------|---|-----------|-----------|---|------------|------------|--|------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|------------|---|
| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | |
| Institutions proper | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sub-degree | – | – | – | 96 | 128 | 172 | – | – | – | 189 | 200 | 214 | 6 | 4 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Undergraduate | 194 | 163 | 128 | 83 | 110 | 129 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 17 | 20 | 20 | 2 | 5 | 11 | 227 | 239 | 248 | – | – | – | 28 | 28 | 32 | |
| Taught postgraduate | 191 | 222 | 263 | 129 | 146 | 160 | 17 | 19 | 22 | 335 | 427 | 497 | 24 | 35 | 44 | 292 | 315 | 334 | 206 | 265 | 274 | 311 | 367 | 402 | |
| Research postgraduate | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | 1 | 1 | 1 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | 1 | – | 2 | 4 | |
| Sub-total | 385 | 385 | 391 | 308 | 384 | 461 | 23 | 26 | 30 | 542 | 648 | 732 | 32 | 44 | 55 | 519 | 554 | 582 | 206 | 265 | 275 | 339 | 397 | 438 | |

Table 3 – Tuition fee income from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions proper, community colleges and other self-financed education arms (HK\$ million) (cont'd)

| | City University of Hong Kong | | | Hong Kong Baptist University | | | Lingnan University | | | The Chinese University of Hong Kong ⁽¹⁾ | | | The Hong Kong Institute of Education ⁽²⁾ | | | The Hong Kong Polytechnic University ⁽³⁾ | | | The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | | | University of Hong Kong | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|---|-----------|-----------|---|------------|------------|--|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 |
| Community colleges | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sub-degree | 256 | 270 | 281 | – | – | – | 35 | 60 | 94 | – | – | – | 69 | 78 | 70 | 209 | 241 | 305 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Undergraduate | 2 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Taught postgraduate | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Research postgraduate | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Sub-total | 258 | 270 | 281 | – | – | – | 35 | 60 | 94 | – | – | – | 69 | 78 | 70 | 209 | 241 | 305 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Other self-financed education arms | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sub-degree | 2 | 1 | 2 | – | – | – | 43 | 56 | 82 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 1 | – | – | – | – | – | 478 | 464 | 478 |
| Undergraduate | 152 | 228 | 238 | – | – | – | 2 | 2 | 3 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 93 | 111 | 134 | – | – | – | 208 | 193 | 186 |
| Taught postgraduate | 19 | 24 | 28 | – | – | – | – | – | 1 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 14 | 15 | 13 | – | – | – | 73 | 77 | 75 |
| Research postgraduate | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Sub-total | 173 | 253 | 268 | – | – | – | 45 | 58 | 86 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 108 | 126 | 147 | – | – | – | 759 | 734 | 739 |

Notes: (1) The Chinese University of Hong Kong has remarked that: (a) tuition fees from part-time research postgraduates are not included; (b) the School of Continuing and Professional Studies is operative as part of the institution proper and its financial results have been included in the figures of The Chinese University of Hong Kong; and (c) the financial information is not available for The Chinese University of Hong Kong-Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Community College as it is a separate legal entity independent of The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

(2) According to The Hong Kong Institute of Education, the tuition fee income of "institution proper" is from award-bearing self-financing programmes only and income from tendered courses and consultancy works is not included.

(3) Tuition fee income from non-award bearing programmes is excluded.

Source: *Official Records of Proceedings of the Legislative Council* (2011).

3.2 Based on **Table 3**, the Research Division has compiled **Table 4** below that adds up the tuition fee income from self-financing programmes offered by various education arms of the UGC-funded institutions between 2008-2009 and 2010-2011. **Table 4** shows that the total tuition fee income received by UGC-funded institutions has been on the increase: HK\$4,010 million in 2008-2009, HK\$4,523 million in 2009-2010 (a 13% year-on-year increase) and HK\$4,954 million in 2010-2011 (a 10% year-on-year increase).

Table 4 – Tuition fee income from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions (HK\$ million)

| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| City University of Hong Kong | 816 | 908 | 940 |
| Hong Kong Baptist University | 308 | 384 | 461 |
| Lingnan University | 103 | 144 | 210 |
| The Chinese University of Hong Kong | 542 | 648 | 732 |
| The Hong Kong Institute of Education | 101 | 122 | 125 |
| The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | 836 | 921 | 1,034 |
| The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | 206 | 265 | 275 |
| The University of Hong Kong | 1,098 | 1,131 | 1,177 |
| Total | 4,010 | 4,523 | 4,954 |

4. Surplus/(deficit) from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions

4.1 **Table 5** shows the amount of surplus/(deficit) arising from self-financing programmes offered by the UGC-funded institutions proper, community colleges and other self-financed education arms. Analyzed by the programmes offered by institutions proper, The University of Hong Kong led the other UGC-funded institutions in terms of making a total surplus of HK\$365 million between 2008-2009 and 2010-2011. This was followed by The Chinese University of Hong Kong (HK\$310 million) and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HK\$306 million).

4.2 For the programmes offered by community colleges, City University of Hong Kong outstripped the other UGC-funded institutions and made a total surplus amounting to HK\$209 million between 2008-2009 and 2010-2011.

4.3 As to the programmes offered by other self-financed education arms, City University of Hong Kong led the pack and made a surplus of HK\$153 million between 2008-2009 and 2010-2011. This was followed by The University of Hong Kong that recorded a surplus of HK\$115 million during the same period.

Table 5 – Surplus/(deficit) from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions proper, community colleges and other self-financed education arms (HK\$ million)

| Institutions proper | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| | City University of Hong Kong | Hong Kong Baptist University | Lingnan University | The Chinese University of Hong Kong | The Hong Kong Institute of Education⁽¹⁾ | The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | The University of Hong Kong |
| 2008-2009 | 86 | (137) | 10 | 23 | (2) | 92 | 52 | 95 |
| 2009-2010 | 88 | (9) | 10 | 127 | 3 | 107 | 93 | 116 |
| 2010-2011 | 81 | 72 | 12 | 160 | 4 | 107 | 53 | 154 |
| Sub-total | 255 | (74) | 32 | 310 | 5 | 306 | 198 | 365 |
| Community colleges | | | | | | | | |
| | City University of Hong Kong | Hong Kong Baptist University | Lingnan University | The Chinese University of Hong Kong | The Hong Kong Institute of Education⁽²⁾ | The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | The University of Hong Kong |
| 2008-2009 | 59 | – | (6) | – | 4 | (41) | – | – |
| 2009-2010 | 65 | – | 3 | – | 7 | 30 | – | – |
| 2010-2011 | 85 | – | 18 | – | 9 | 52 | – | – |
| Sub-total | 209 | – | 15 | – | 20 | 41 | – | – |
| Other self-financed education arms | | | | | | | | |
| | City University of Hong Kong | Hong Kong Baptist University | Lingnan University⁽³⁾ | The Chinese University of Hong Kong | The Hong Kong Institute of Education | The Hong Kong Polytechnic University⁽⁴⁾ | The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | The University of Hong Kong |
| 2008-2009 | 31 | – | 2 | – | – | (10) | – | 26 |
| 2009-2010 | 63 | – | 3 | – | – | 20 | – | 45 |
| 2010-2011 | 59 | – | 11 | – | – | 34 | – | 44 |
| Sub-total | 153 | – | 16 | – | – | 44 | – | 115 |

Notes: (1) According to The Hong Kong Institute of Education, the surplus was generated from award-bearing self-financing programmes only. Institute Central has not shared the surplus since 2009-2010.

(2) The Hong Kong Institute of Education reports surplus from all programmes under the School of Continuing and Professional Education.

(3) According to Lingnan University, the surplus was generated from the Lingnan Institute of Further Education.

(4) The Hong Kong Polytechnic University reports surplus from the School of Professional Education and Executive Development and the Hong Kong CyberU Limited.

Source: *Official Records of Proceedings of the Legislative Council* (2011).

4.4 **Table 6** highlights the arrangement of handling the surplus generated from self-financing programmes by individual UGC-funded institutions. Basically, the faculties/departments of all the three categories of UGC-funded institutions (i.e. institutions proper, community colleges and self-financed education arms) are allowed to keep their surpluses generated from self-financing programmes.

Table 6 – Arrangement of handling the surplus generated from self-financing programmes by individual UGC-funded institutions

| Institutions proper | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| | City University of Hong Kong | Hong Kong Baptist University | Lingnan University | The Chinese University of Hong Kong | The Hong Kong Institute of Education | The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | The University of Hong Kong |
| Surplus is kept by ⁽¹⁾ | Faculties/ Departments | Respective budget controllers of the programmes | University Central/ Departments | Faculties | Institute Central/ Faculties/ Departments | University Central/Faculties/ Departments | University Central/Schools/ Departments | Faculties/ Departments |
| Community colleges | | | | | | | | |
| | City University of Hong Kong | Hong Kong Baptist University | Lingnan University | The Chinese University of Hong Kong | The Hong Kong Institute of Education | The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | The University of Hong Kong |
| Surplus is kept by ⁽¹⁾ | Community college | N/A | Community college | N/A | School of Continuing and Professional Education | Community college/ University | N/A | N/A |
| Other self-financed education arms | | | | | | | | |
| | City University of Hong Kong | Hong Kong Baptist University | Lingnan University | The Chinese University of Hong Kong | The Hong Kong Institute of Education | The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | The University of Hong Kong |
| Surplus is kept by ⁽¹⁾ | University Central | N/A | Lingnan Institute of Further Education/ University Central | N/A | N/A | School of Professional Education and Executive Development/Hong Kong CyberU Limited/ University Central | N/A | School of Professional and Continuing Education |

Note: (1) The deployment of surplus arising from its self-financing activities is subject to individual institutions' internal policies and guidelines.

Source: *Official Records of Proceedings of the Legislative Council* (2011).

4.5 Based on **Table 5** above, the Research Division calculates the total amount of surplus/(deficit) arising from the self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions. As shown in **Table 7**, for the UGC-funded institutions as a whole, the amount of surplus increased from HK\$284 million in 2008-2009 to HK\$771 million in 2009-2010 (a 271% year-on-year increase), and further to HK\$955 million in 2010-2011 (a 24% year-on-year increase).

4.6 The leading three UGC-funded institutions which generated the most surplus in 2010-2011 were City University of Hong Kong (HK\$225 million), The University of Hong Kong (HK\$198 million) and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HK\$193 million).

Table 7 – Total amount of surplus/(deficit) from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions (HK\$ million)

| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| City University of Hong Kong | 176 | 216 | 225 |
| Hong Kong Baptist University | (137) | (9) | 72 |
| Lingnan University | 6 | 16 | 41 |
| The Chinese University of Hong Kong | 23 | 127 | 160 |
| The Hong Kong Institute of Education | 2 | 10 | 13 |
| The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | 41 | 157 | 193 |
| The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | 52 | 93 | 53 |
| The University of Hong Kong | 121 | 161 | 198 |
| Total | 284 | 771 | 955 |

5. Surplus/(deficit) margin from self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions

5.1 The Research Division has made use of **Tables 4** and **7** to calculate the surplus margin of the self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions. The surplus/(deficit) margin is defined as the ratio of the amount of surplus/(deficit) to the total tuition fee income. The surplus/(deficit) margins of individual UGC-funded institutions concerned are shown in **Table 8** below.

5.2 For the UGC-funded institutions as a whole, the surplus margin of self-financing programmes increased from 7% in 2008-2009 to 17% in 2009-2010 and further to 19% in 2010-2011. For individual UGC-funded institutions, all recorded a double-digit surplus margin in 2010-2011. In particular, five UGC-funded institutions (i.e. City University of Hong Kong, Lingnan University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) generated a surplus margin of 19%-24% from their self-financing programmes in 2010-2011.

Table 8 – Surplus/(deficit) margin of self-financing programmes offered by UGC-funded institutions

| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|
| City University of Hong Kong | 22% | 24% | 24% |
| Hong Kong Baptist University | (44%) | (2%) | 16% |
| Lingnan University | 6% | 11% | 20% |
| The Chinese University of Hong Kong | 4% | 20% | 22% |
| The Hong Kong Institute of Education | 2% | 8% | 10% |
| The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | 5% | 17% | 19% |
| The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology | 25% | 35% | 19% |
| The University of Hong Kong | 11% | 14% | 17% |
| Gross surplus/(deficit) margin | 7% | 17% | 19% |

6. Deliberations of the Panel

6.1 At its meeting on 12 December 2011, the Panel raised concerns about the large amount of surplus generated by the UGC-funded institutions from self-financing programmes when discussing the Administration's proposal to extend the ambit of the Start-up Loan Scheme for post-secondary education providers. The major concern raised by the Panel was that some of these self-financing programme providers had generated huge surpluses at the expense of the students, who had to borrow loans to pay for the high tuition fees and incurred heavy debts as a result. This situation was undesirable and unfair to the students. Members considered it necessary for the Administration to take steps to regulate the surplus generated from self-financing programmes and ensure that such surplus would be used on students. Possible options were to (a) set a cap on the surplus margin of self-financing programmes, and (b) require that the surplus be used for improving the quality of the programmes.

6.2 The Administration responded that institutions had the autonomy to determine the tuition fees for self-financing programmes according to market forces. As different types of programmes (including sub-degree, degree and taught postgraduate programmes) were offered by different institutions, it would be difficult to generalize the situation and set a cap on the tuition fee of these programmes. It was necessary to strike a balance between regulating self-financing post-secondary programmes and preserving the autonomy of the institutions concerned.

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