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13 June 2013

Mr Colin CHUI  
Clerk to Subcommittee  
Legislative Council Complex  
No. 1, Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr CHUI,

**Subcommittee on Poverty  
Follow-up to meeting on 8 May 2013**

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on Poverty held on 8 May 2013, Members requested the Administration to provide written response to a number of issues raised during the discussion of the agenda item "Support for Disadvantaged Groups such as Persons with Disabilities, Ethnic Minorities, New-arrivals and Single-parent Families" as set out in your letter of 16 May 2013 to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare. This letter aims to provide Members with information on language policies for university admission and the number of ethnic minority students who did not meet the entry requirements of public examinations for tertiary education.

The University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions have, starting from 2008, provided the flexibility for acceptance of alternative

Chinese qualifications for application of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students<sup>1</sup> under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS). Specifically, the institutions accept alternative qualifications in Chinese Language, such as those under the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) for JUPAS applications under the following specified circumstances:

- (a) the student has learned Chinese Language for less than six years while receiving primary and secondary education; or
- (b) the student has learned Chinese Language for six years or more in schools, but has been taught an adapted and simpler Chinese Language curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in our local schools.

Individual institutions have set out further details of their requirements, including the alternative Chinese Language qualifications to be accepted and the minimum gradings required, as well as any specific requirements of individual undergraduate programmes. Such details have been uploaded to the JUPAS website.

In 2012, out of 571 Secondary 6 NCS students attending public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools offering the local curriculum, 510 took the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE), 25% of them (i.e. 125, and 105 of them used alternative Chinese qualifications) met the general entrance requirements of

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<sup>1</sup> For the planning of education support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorised as NCS students.

UGC-funded undergraduate programmes, and around 40% of those who met the entrance requirement or 10% of the total NCS student-candidature (i.e. 50, and 40 of them used alternative Chinese qualifications) received JUPAS offers<sup>2</sup>. For the same year, there were a total of 72 620 day-school candidates sitting for HKDSEE. About 37% (i.e. 26 636) met the general entrance requirements of UGC-funded undergraduate programmes. Around 51% of those who met the entrance requirement, or 19% of the total day-school candidates (i.e. 13 596) received JUPAS offers. It is worth noting that like local students, there are various factors that may affect NCS students' learning performance. In addition, we should not assess the effectiveness of the educational support measures solely based on the academic results of the students.

The Government is committed to supporting the integration of NCS students into the community, including facilitating their early adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese Language. We will continue to review and enhance our educational support measures in light of the views of the stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,



( WAI Pui-wah )

for Secretary for Education

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<sup>2</sup> These figures do not include NCS students progressing from schools other than public sector and DSS schools (e.g. private schools), nor non-Chinese students by ethnicity with Chinese as the spoken language at home. Hence, they are different from the figures provided by UGC-funded institutions, under which 74 NCS students were admitted to UGC-funded four-year undergraduate programmes via the JUPAS route in 2012.