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Education Bureau  
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

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16 May 2013

Ms Anita SIT  
Clerk to Legislative Council Panel on Public Service  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Sit,

**Legislative Council Panel on Public Service**  
**Follow-up to meeting on 15 April 2013**

I refer to your letter of 17 April 2013 requesting the Administration to provide information on quality assurance of sub-degree programmes and the recognition of qualifications attained through these programmes for civil service appointments. We have consulted the Civil Service Bureau and our response is as follows.

***Quality assurance of sub-degree programmes***

Sub-degree qualification, including Associate Degree (AD) and Higher Diploma (HD), is a valuable standalone exit qualification for further studies and employment in administrative and management positions at entry level. The Government is dedicated to promote and enhance the quality of the sub-degree programmes provided by post-secondary education institutions.

First of all, the Common Descriptors for AD and HD programmes have been promulgated for observance by the sub-degree providers and quality assurance bodies. The descriptors have set out the requirements in areas such as entrance requirements, curriculum content, programme objectives and learning outcomes. The Common Descriptors were further updated in 2011 to tie in with the implementation of the New Academic Structure.

Besides, there are two quality assurance bodies in Hong Kong which are responsible for monitoring the quality of sub-degree programmes. The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), being the sole statutory quality assurance body in Hong Kong, conducts a whole range of quality assurance exercises including initial and periodic review of operators at the institutional level and accreditation of individual programmes (including sub-degree programmes) except the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions with self-accrediting status<sup>1</sup>. The Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC) was established by the Heads of Universities Committees to provide peer review of the quality assurance processes of self-financing sub-degree programmes offered by the UGC-funded institutions. Only the locally-accredited sub-degree programmes are eligible to enter into the Information Portal for Accredited Post-secondary Programmes (iPASS) at [www.ipass.gov.hk](http://www.ipass.gov.hk).

It is also worth noting that a Handbook on Good Practices in Quality Assurance for the sub-degree sector has been published to set out the essential principles and practices in quality assurance, promote the sharing of good practices among institutions, enhance consistency across the sector and further improve the overall quality of the sector. Moreover, the Liaison Committee on Quality Assurance, comprising representatives of the Education Bureau, HKCAAVQ, JQRC and Quality Assurance Council under the aegis of UGC, will monitor quality assurance-related issues such as compliance with the Common Descriptors, promote sharing of good practices among all the quality assurance bodies, and enhance consistency and transparency for better accountability.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hong Kong Institute of Education has self-accrediting status in respect of its teacher education learning programmes. Its non-teacher education learning programmes are subject to validation by HKCAAVQ.

***Recognition of sub-degree qualifications for civil service appointments***

The Government has accepted since June 2001 the qualification of locally-accredited AD as broadly comparable to HD qualifications for civil service appointments. Furthermore, holders of locally-accredited HD and AD are accepted as having attained Level 3 in English Language and Level 2 in Chinese Language in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) / Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSEE) for civil service appointments. The aforementioned arrangements were made with regard to the admission requirements, course assessment and coverage of language modules in HD and AD programmes accredited locally.

Under the prevailing arrangements, holders of locally-accredited sub-degree qualifications may apply for civil service posts with entry requirements set at sub-degree level or below. At present, there are 28 civil service ranks with their entry requirements set at sub-degree level. Details are at **Annex**. Holders of sub-degree qualifications may also apply for many other civil service ranks requiring academic qualifications below sub-degree level, including HKDSEE, Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination and HKCEE (such as Companies Registration Officer II, Assistant Supplies Officer, Social Security Officer II, Assistant Census and Survey Officer, Labour Inspector II, Tax Inspector II, Ambulanceman, Police Constable, Immigration Assistant, etc.).

Yours sincerely,



( Ms Pecvin YONG )  
for Secretary for Education

c.c. Secretary for Civil Service (Attn: Miss Natalie Li)

## Annex

### List of Civil Service Ranks with Entry Requirements set at Sub-degree Level <sup>Note</sup>

Rank	Higher Diploma	Associate Degree
1. Ambulance Officer	✓	✓
2. Analyst / Programmer II *	✓	✓
3. Assistant Information Officer *	✓	✓
4. Assistant Inspector of Works	✓	
5. Assistant Leisure Services Manager II	✓	✓
6. Assistant Programme Officer <sup>#</sup>	✓	✓
7. Dental Therapist	✓	
8. Dispenser	✓	
9. Health Inspector II	✓	✓
10. Immigration Officer	✓	✓
11. Industrial Officer (Correctional Services)	✓	✓
12. Inspector of Customs and Excise	✓	✓
13. Inspector of Police	✓	✓
14. Occupational Safety Officer II	✓	✓
15. Occupational Therapist I	✓	
16. Officer (Correctional Services)	✓	✓
17. Operations Officer (Airworthiness) * <sup>#</sup>	✓	
18. Optometrist	✓	
19. Physiotherapist I	✓	
20. Police Translator II	✓	✓
21. Programme Officer <sup>#</sup>	✓	✓
22. Radiographer II	✓	
23. Registered Nurse	✓	
24. Senior Programme Officer <sup>#</sup>	✓	✓
25. Station Officer (Operational) / (Control)	✓	✓
26. Statistical Officer II	✓	✓
27. Survey Officer (Engineering) / (Land) / (Photogrammetry) / (Planning)	✓	
28. Transport Services Officer II	✓	

<sup>Note</sup> These are the general academic requirements of the ranks only. There may be other requirements including specific field of study / experience / skills.

\* These ranks have language proficiency requirements higher than Level 3 in English Language and Level 2 in Chinese Language in HKDSEE / HKCEE.

<sup>#</sup> These ranks are not the entry ranks of the respective grades.