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 Hong Kong Legislative Council
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Submission on the Implementation of a Single Quality Assurance Body

SCAD Foundation (Hong Kong) Limited (SCAD Hong Kong) is grateful for the privilege of addressing the Hong Kong Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Education, and commends the Panel for its commitment to quality assurance and to establishing Hong Kong as a regional hub for education.

I. SCAD Hong Kong Supports the Implementation of a Single Quality Assurance Body for Hong Kong That Creates a Level Playing Field for All Locally-accredited Post-secondary Programs

In furtherance of establishing Hong Kong as a regional hub for education, SCAD Hong Kong endorses the implementation of a single quality assurance body that creates and promotes a level playing field for all of Hong Kong's locally-accredited post-secondary programs—whether local or non-local, publicly-funded or self-financing.

II. Hong Kong's Current Quality Assurance System Results in Separate and Unequal Treatment of Locally-accredited Non-local Post-secondary Programs to the Detriment of Local Students and Hong Kong's Ability to Become a Regional Education Hub

Hong Kong's current quality assurance system results in separate and unequal treatment of locally-accredited non-local post-secondary programs to the detriment of local students and Hong Kong's ability to become a regional education hub. Consider the recent *Technical Refinements of Measures in relation to Hong Kong's Development as a Regional Hub*. **Under the Technical Refinements, non-local students enrolled full-time in locally-accredited non-local programs are prohibited from participating in part-time on-campus employment, while no such restriction is placed on non-local students enrolled in full-time locally-accredited local programs.** SCAD Hong Kong is concerned that this restriction will adversely affect local students' access to important student support services.

For example, at SCAD Hong Kong, all students are eligible to receive individualized assistance from peer tutors in a variety of areas, ranging from specialized equipment and computer software usage to English-language proficiency. Currently, the best qualified local and non-local students work as peer tutors. The new restriction will limit the pool of eligible candidates for these highly competitive skill-based positions and might negatively impact the overall quality and accessibility of this service on our campus. **With local students comprising 60.1 percent of SCAD Hong Kong's total enrollment,¹ local students will be disproportionately affected by this change.**

¹ All figures cited in this position paper are as reported to the EDB in SCAD Hong Kong's Mid-Year Report for the period 1 July 2013-31 December 2013, unless otherwise noted in a specific footnote.

In addition to the above, the *Technical Refinements*' restrictions on non-local students' ability to work on campus² and to participate in the Immigration Arrangement for Non-local Graduates (IANG) may cause overseas students to lose interest in locally accredited non-local programs in Hong Kong, much to the detriment of Hong Kong's efforts to become a regional education hub.

III. A Single Quality Assurance Body for Hong Kong Should Accord Equal Treatment to Locally-accredited Non-local Post-secondary Programs in All Material Respects

Any contemplated single quality assurance body for Hong Kong should ensure that its policies and regulations accord equal treatment to all locally-accredited post-secondary programs in all material respects, and particularly concerning (1) their ability to recruit and admit qualified students regardless of the students' home country (including Mainland China), (2) the forms of government resources and financial assistance available to the programs and their students, and (3) the immigration and employment rights and privileges of the programs' students and graduates. As evidenced by the recent *Technical Refinements*, Hong Kong's current quality assurance system discriminates against locally-accredited non-local post-secondary programs on these three important issues despite evidence that **locally-accredited non-local post-secondary programs' commitment and contributions to the establishment of Hong Kong as a regional hub for education are commensurate with those of locally-accredited local post-secondary programs**. For proof, consider SCAD Hong Kong's compliance with local quality assurance standards, enrollment of and financial support for local students, employment of local residents, investment in revitalizing local facilities, and support for local businesses, as well as its benefits for local residents:

Compliance with Local Quality Assurance Standards

Since opening in 2010, SCAD Hong Kong has consistently met and exceeded the stringent quality assurance standards of the Hong Kong Education Bureau (EDB) and the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). **Each of SCAD Hong Kong's 21 courses of study are approved by the EDB, accredited by the HKCAAVQ, and recognized at Levels 5 or 6 on the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework.**

Enrollment of and Financial Support for Local Students

SCAD Hong Kong is committed to providing local students with excellent education opportunities, as demonstrated by its enrollment of **315 local undergraduate and post-graduate students, who collectively comprise 60.1 percent of SCAD Hong Kong's total enrollment**. SCAD Hong Kong's commitment to local students is further demonstrated by the significant financial support that SCAD Hong Kong provides to them, with **78.8 percent of local students receiving HK\$10,457,928 in scholarships and institutional aid directly from SCAD Hong Kong**.³

² In contrast to the on-campus employment restrictions imposed by the *Technical Refinements*, SCAD's locations in the United States and France allow non-local students with appropriate student visas, including students from Hong Kong, to take up part-time on-campus employment.

³ As reported to the EDB in SCAD Hong Kong's Annual Report for the period 1 July 2012-30 June 2013. Scholarship and institutional aid information is reported to the EDB on an annual basis, with the Annual Report for the period 1 July 2012-30 June 2013 representing the most current data available.

Employment of Local Residents

SCAD Hong Kong directly employs 95 local residents as academic and non-academic staff. Together, **local academic and non-academic staff members comprise 91.3 percent of all SCAD Hong Kong employees**, attesting to SCAD Hong Kong's commitment to providing local residents with high quality jobs.

Investment in Revitalizing Local Facilities

SCAD Hong Kong has invested HK\$82 million to revitalize and repurpose the historic North Kowloon Magistracy Building (NKMB)⁴ into an art and design university that has contributed to the establishment of Hong Kong as a regional education hub. Despite the availability of Hong Kong government funds to assist with the costs of revitalizing historic properties, **SCAD Hong Kong has never sought nor accepted any government funds to help pay for the costs of renovating the NKMB.** SCAD Hong Kong's revitalization of the NKMB has not only restored an important part of Hong Kong's architectural heritage, but also created a nexus for cultural enrichment and exchange.

Support for Local Businesses

For the fiscal year ending 30 June 2013, **SCAD Hong Kong paid HK\$35.6 million, or 64.5 percent of all of its operating and capital expenses, to 323 local vendors**, demonstrating SCAD Hong Kong's support for local businesses.⁵

Benefits for Local Residents

SCAD Hong Kong enriches the lives of local residents through cultural programming and community service to diverse groups within Hong Kong. **In just the past 18 months, more than 10,000 participants attended nearly 50 SCAD Hong Kong events**, such as Heritage Fiesta 2013 programming, art exhibitions and public lectures.⁶ SCAD Hong Kong students, faculty and staff have also collaborated with Child Welfare Scheme Hong Kong to enhance education, health care and social opportunities for local disadvantaged children and adults. Most recently, SCAD Hong Kong students, faculty and staff conducted a series of workshops on silk screening, garden model-making and other crafts for more than 140 elderly residents of Sham Shui Po.

SCAD Hong Kong has consistently complied with and exceeded all applicable **local** quality assurance standards, enrolls and provides financial support to an ever-growing number of **local** students, employs a workforce that is 91.3 percent **local**, has invested HK\$82 million in revitalizing **local** facilities, directly contributes HK\$35.6 million to **local** businesses and enriches the daily lives of **local** residents. Yet, over and over, most recently through the *Technical Refinements*, SCAD Hong Kong has been denied the rights and privileges bestowed upon locally-accredited local post-secondary programs because of its classification as an operator of locally-accredited non-local post-secondary programs and without regard to evidence that, **in all material respects, SCAD Hong Kong operates as a de facto local institution.** Any contemplated single quality assurance system for Hong Kong should end this inequitable treatment and accord equal rights and privileges to all

⁴ As calculated by SCAD U.S.' office of accounting in conjunction with SCAD Hong Kong.

⁵ As calculated by SCAD U.S.' office of accounting in conjunction with SCAD Hong Kong.

⁶ As reported to the EDB in SCAD Hong Kong's Annual Report for the period 1 July 2012-30 June 2013 and Mid-Year Report for the period 1 July 2013-31 December 2013.

locally-accredited post-secondary programs that meet its quality assurance standards, regardless of their local or non-local origins.

IV. A Single Quality Assurance Body That Creates a Level Playing Field for All Locally-accredited Post-secondary Programs Is Necessary for Hong Kong to Maintain a Competitive Edge in the Global Marketplace

As evidenced in Section III, SCAD Hong Kong strongly supports Hong Kong's efforts to become a regional education hub that attracts and nurtures the talents required for Hong Kong to maintain a competitive edge in the global marketplace. Hong Kong's implementation of a single quality assurance body for all post-secondary programs is a positive step toward this goal. If Hong Kong's potential as an education hub is to be realized, however, then LegCo should begin by repealing and replacing any policies and regulations that unfairly favor locally-accredited local post-secondary programs over locally-accredited non-local post-secondary programs. Such inequitable treatment, as exemplified by the recent *Technical Refinements*, works only to discourage current and potential non-local programs from investing in the continued advancement and internationalization of Hong Kong's post-secondary education sector.