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來函檔號 YOUR REF:
電 話 TELEPHONE: 2524 1795

中國香港灣仔港灣道 6 至 8 號瑞安中心 7 樓
7/F Shui On Centre, 6-8 Harbour Road
Wan Chai, Hong Kong, China
電話 Tel: (852) 2524 3987
傳真 Fax: (852) 2845 1596
電子郵件 E-Mail: ugc@ugc.edu.hk
網址 Homepage: www.ugc.edu.hk

29 December 2014

Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Education
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Miss Polly Yeung)

Dear Miss Yeung,

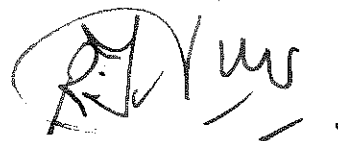
Panel on Education

**Funding support for research work
conducted by the post-secondary education sector**

Thank you for your letter of 12 December 2014.

The response to the follow-up questions raised by Dr Hon Helena WONG is set out at Annex for Members' reference.

Yours sincerely,



(Richard T Armour)
Secretary-General

c.c. Secretary for Education, Education Bureau
(Attn: Mr Wallace Lau)

**Legislative Council
Panel on Education**

**Reply to the follow-up questions
raised by Dr Hon Helena WONG on 10 December 2014**

1. Research is crucial to higher education development and enhancing the competitiveness of an economy. All along, the Government and the University Grants Committee (UGC) are committed to supporting the research work of institutions. Apart from research grants, the Government and UGC also provide publicly-funded research postgraduates (RPg) places to institutions, which serve to enhance academic standards, extend the frontiers of knowledge and develop theories through research activities.

Competitive elements in the allocation of UGC-funded RPg places has been introduced starting from 2012/13, with roughly half of such places allocated competitively by 2016/17, in which about 405 places will be allocated under the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS); 600 places will be allocated according to each institution's success in project schemes funded by the Research Grants Council (RGC); 600 places will be allocated on the basis of the latest score an institution achieved in the Research Assessment Exercise; 600 places will be allocated on outcome based evaluation of RPg programmes; and 600 places will be allocated by the expansion of the HKPFS and/or by the award results of the RGC funding schemes. The remaining 2 790 places will continue to be allocated on a historical basis as before.

The number of UGC-funded RPg places by institution from 2013/14 to 2015/16 is at Appendix A. After institutions have been informed of the number of the allocated RPg places, they will deploy the places among the different disciplines. The UGC does not have the information on the number of RPg places allocated to institutions by broad academic programme category.

2. & 3. Established in 2009 by the RGC under the UGC, the HKPFS welcomes applications from local students and students from any other country or region. Those who are seeking admission as new full-time PhD students in UGC-funded institutions, irrespective of their country of origin, prior work experience and ethnic background, are eligible to apply. The HKPFS provides an annual stipend of HK\$240,000 and a conference and research-related travel allowance of HK\$10,000 per year up to three years.

Since the establishment of the HKPFS, a total of about 810 awardees from 65 countries/regions have taken up study in PhD programmes in Hong Kong. The HKPFS unites top international research postgraduate students and Hong Kong's world-class research institutions. It helps Hong Kong excel at research and widen our pool of talent and contacts. This also furthers internationalisation of the higher education sector in Hong Kong.

The expenditure of the HKPFS from 2010/11 to 2014/15 are set out at *Appendix B*. The number of applicants and awardees of the HKPFS by place of origin from 2010/11 to 2014/15 is set out at *Appendix C*.

Statistics on the non-local awardees who stay and work in Hong Kong after graduation are not available from institutions. As a matter of fact, contributions that awardees can make after graduation will not be confined to their employment in Hong Kong from a long-term perspective. Given the close ties they have established with Hong Kong institutions and their thesis supervisors, they are able to maintain cooperation with local institutions and their former supervisors even if they engage in academic pursuits outside Hong Kong, which can enhance the network of collaborative studies between Hong Kong and other places.

On the other hand, the Education Bureau has recently launched the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme to support local students to pursue studies in world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong with a view to grooming a top cadre of talents with global vision, international network and world-class education, thereby contributing to enhancing Hong Kong's competitiveness as Asia's World City in a globalised knowledge economy. This scheme also seeks to support those students who have excellent academic achievements but lack the financial means to study in top-notch universities outside Hong Kong. This scheme

covers all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It will benefit three cohorts of students, with initially up to 100 students per cohort, starting from the 2015/16 academic year and then its effectiveness will be reviewed.

**UGC-funded Research Postgraduate (RPg) Places
by Institution, 2013/14 to 2015/16**

Institution	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
CityU	520	536	525
HKBU	209	228	225
LU	64	69	62
CUHK	1 534	1 495	1 440
HKIED	39	45	49
PolyU	560	580	553
HKUST	1 104	1 099	1 035
HKU	1 565	1 543	1 475
Reserved for the HKPFS*			231*
Total	5 595	5 595	5 595

* 231 are reserved for the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS) and will be allocated in March/April 2015.

Abbreviations:

CityU City University of Hong Kong

HKBU Hong Kong Baptist University

LU Lingnan University

CUHK The Chinese University of Hong Kong

HKIED The Hong Kong Institute of Education

PolyU The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

HKUST The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

HKU The University of Hong Kong

**Expenditure of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS),
2010/11 to 2014/15**

Academic Years	Expenditure¹	No. of Beneficiaries
2010/11	\$26.5 million	106
2011/12	\$55.5 million	222 ²
2012/13	\$96.8 million	387 ²
2013/14	\$105.5 million	422 ²
2014/15	\$134.8 million	539 ²

Note:

1. Expenditure of the HKPFS is funded by recurrent grants from the UGC.
2. Including new awardees and awardees from previous year(s) who continue to benefit from the HKPFS.

Number of applicants and awardees of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS)
by place of origin, 2010/11 to 2014/15

Academic Year	Place of origin	Number of applicants	Number of awardees	As % of number of applicants
2010/11	Hong Kong	151	10	6.62%
	The Mainland of China	1 490	71	4.77%
	Other places in Asia	958	12	1.25%
	The rest of the world	397	22	5.54%
	Total	2 996	115	3.84%
2011/12	Hong Kong	205	12	5.85%
	The Mainland of China	2 475	82	3.31%
	Other places in Asia	936	14	1.50%
	The rest of the world	408	17	4.17%
	Total	4 024	125	3.11%
2012/13	Hong Kong	179	16	8.94%
	The Mainland of China	2 477	92	3.71%
	Other places in Asia	966	21	2.17%
	The rest of the world	631	36	5.71%
	Total	4 253	165	3.88%
2013/14	Hong Kong	219	14	6.39%
	The Mainland of China	3 002	103	3.43%
	Other places in Asia	872	19	2.18%
	The rest of the world	692	49	7.08%
	Total	4 785	185	3.87%

2014/15	Hong Kong	198	13	6.57%
	The Mainland of China	2 823	131	4.64%
	Other places in Asia	991	29	2.93%
	The rest of the world	743	50	6.73%
	Total	4 755	223	4.69%

Note :

1. The place of origin of non-local students is determined having regard to their nationality.
2. The above statistics are compiled based on prevailing country classification when collecting the data from applications.