

HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education

Code of Practice for SFTE Presentation to Legco Education Panel

In general terms, HKU SPACE and HKU support the promulgation of the Code. There would be four main points to make:

1. The self-financed continuing education sector is by its nature very competitive. Hence, there is some commercial sensitivity about the disclosure of strategic and development plans. HKU SPACE certainly produces these documents and circulates them within the institution and to our Board of Directors etc. However, we would have some reservation about a wider distribution that could include competing institutions.
2. In terms of financial information we do, of course, fulfil our statutory requirements in terms of reporting as required under the Companies Ordinance. In our Annual Report, we give a general outline of our financial health.

The School is not for profit but as a self-financing institution must aim to produce a sustainable surplus for investment in enhanced facilities for learners and new programme development. The School also provides scholarship support for students, especially the full-time students, and seeks to provide more scholarship support for students.

3. As a general point, we recognise the need for government to regulate the sector but, again, it should be borne in mind that the sector is mostly not for profit as well as self-financing and is therefore providing higher education opportunities which the government does not wish to fund. In so doing, it must be responsive to community and market demand and hence we hope government will avoid over-regulation. In particular, it is not appropriate for strict quotas to be set on admissions provided the institution can demonstrate quality operation, given that it is important to be sensitive to market and community demand and not be prevented from meeting this via rigid, externally imposed quotas. Quality Assurance in this respect is important and the University and HKU SPACE are totally committed to provide a high quality provision of programmes as befits a leading self-accrediting institution in HK. This is underpinned by a comprehensive quality assurance policy covering new programme development as well as annual and periodic programme review that takes into account student feedback.
4. It is the School's stated policy to compete on quality and not on price, hence its fee levels are on the high side. The sector is also facing a diminishing market demand from full-time students given the demographic decline in the coming decade. In this context it is hoped that government may further develop the education hub policy so that more students may be attracted from overseas, particularly from Mainland China.

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