

# **立法會**

## ***Legislative Council***

LC Paper No. CB(4)1287/14-15(05)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

### **Panel on Education**

**Meeting on 15 July 2015**

### **Background brief on issues related to the promotion of vocational education**

#### **Purpose**

This paper provides a summary of the major views and concerns expressed by Members on the promotion of vocational education in Hong Kong.

#### **Background**

##### Overview

2. According to the Administration, it is committed to providing quality, flexible and diversified study pathways with multiple entry and exit points for secondary school leavers. It has highlighted the pivotal role of vocational education in broadening the learning opportunities for school leavers and in-service personnel as well as nurturing the requisite human capital in support of Hong Kong's development. In gist, the existing vocational education system is underpinned by the arrangements as described in the ensuing paragraphs.

##### *Qualifications Framework*

3. The Government launched the Qualifications Framework ("QF") in May 2008 with the objective of promoting lifelong learning and enhancing the competitiveness of the local workforce. QF is a seven-level hierarchy that orders and supports different qualifications, thereby facilitating articulation among academic, vocational and continuing education by providing a comprehensive network of learning pathways. Under QF, Specification of Competency Standards are drawn up by 20 Industry Training Advisory Committees, which set out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required

of employees in different functional areas of the respective sectors, and provide a basis for course providers to design training courses.

#### *Vocational education at senior secondary level*

4. At the senior secondary level, career-related and vocational education is implemented through the Applied Learning ("ApL") courses and the career-related experiences embedded in the Other Learning Experiences activities. In the 2013-2014 school year, around 320 secondary schools offered 37 ApL courses in six different areas<sup>1</sup> for about 10 000 Secondary ("S") 5 and 6 students. ApL courses have stronger elements of practical learning linked to broad professional and vocational fields. Attainment in ApL subjects in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") Examination is recognized for admission to post-secondary programmes. In the 2014 HKDSE Examination, over 4 330 candidates had registered in ApL subjects.

#### *Vocational education at post-secondary level*

5. At the sub-degree level (QF Level 4), 259 of the approximately 400 full-time sub-degree programmes offered in the 2013-2014 academic year are Higher Diploma ("HD") programmes, which seek to enable students to acquire the appropriate attitude, knowledge and skills to support their initial employment at the para-professional level. At least 60% of the HD programme curriculum comprises contents in specific disciplines, professions or vocational skills.

6. At the undergraduate level (QF Level 5), some higher education institutions offer degree programmes with strong professional/vocational element. Articulation opportunities to senior year places of University Grants Committee-funded undergraduate programmes and top-up degree programmes in the self-financing sector are provided to eligible sub-degree graduates.

#### *Statutory bodies*

7. The Vocational Training Council ("VTC") is the major vocational education and training provider in Hong Kong offering a wide range of full-time and part-time vocational education and training programmes leading to formal qualifications from post-S3 to degree levels (i.e. QF Levels 2 to 5) with multiple entry and exit points and articulation pathways. VTC has 13 member institutions which provide different progression pathways for career advancement and lifelong learning.

---

<sup>1</sup> The six areas are Creative Studies; Media and Communication; Business, Management and Law; Services; Applied Science; and Engineering and Production.

8. Apart from VTC, the Construction Industry Council, the Clothing Industry Training Authority and the Employees Retraining Board are also involved in the provision of vocational education and training.

#### Latest initiatives

9. In his 2014 Policy Address, the Chief Executive highlighted that mainstream education is not a straightjacket that fits all young people as everyone has his or her own interests and abilities. The Government should re-establish the positioning of vocational education in the education system. A series of measures were also announced to strengthen vocational education. Some major initiatives include –

#### *Pilot Training and Support Scheme ("the Pilot Scheme")*

10. With the approval of the Finance Committee ("FC") in July 2014 for a commitment of \$144 million, VTC has started to implement the Pilot Scheme which aims to integrate structured apprenticeship training programmes and clear career progression pathways to attract and retain talent for specific industries with a keen demand for labour. The Pilot Scheme will benefit a total of 2 000 students.

#### *Industrial attachment*

11. Starting from the 2014-2015 academic year, the Government has allocated recurrent funding of about \$18 million to VTC to provide industrial attachment opportunities for about 9 000 students mainly studying HD programmes and certain Diploma in Vocational Education programmes.

#### *Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education ("the Task Force")*

12. The Task Force was set up in June 2014 with a view to mapping out a strategy to promote vocational education and raise public awareness and recognition towards vocational education. Its members are drawn from a mix of expertise and backgrounds. The Task Force will submit a report to the Secretary for Education by mid-2015.

#### *Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors ("SSSDP")*

13. With the approval of FC for a commitment of some \$960 million, the Government will, starting from the 2015-2016 academic year, subsidize up to 1 000 students per cohort to pursue designated full-time locally-accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines to nurture talents to meet Hong Kong's social and economic needs. The SSSDP will be

implemented on a pilot basis for three cohorts of students, and then subject to a review of its effectiveness.

#### *VTC*

14. VTC has been invited to draw up a strategic development plan for its campuses to foster synergy and provide state-of-the-art facilities pivotal to enhancing the image and quality of vocational education. The Government will consider the strategic campus development plan to be submitted by VTC in due course.

#### *Qualifications Framework Fund ("QF Fund")*

15. The QF Fund of \$1 billion was established on 1 September 2014 to provide a steady source of income to support the sustainable development and implementation of QF.

### **Major views and concerns**

16. After commencement of the Fifth Legislative Council, the Panel on Education ("the Panel") had pursued with the Administration the latest development of vocational education in Hong Kong. Members also sought information on the progress of various initiatives and the resources implications when examining the Estimates of Expenditure.

#### Promoting vocational education

17. The Panel was aware of an entrenched bias among some people in the community in favour of traditional academic pursuits. Members generally considered that more could be done to promote vocational education as an attractive pathway and help tackle the entrenched perception of vocational education being a second choice for school leavers. The provision of more information and advice on different articulation options was considered useful for students.

18. In this connection, members noted that as announced in the 2014 Policy Address, the Education Bureau ("EDB") would increase the manpower of its Career Guidance Team to provide holistic support to schools in providing career guidance service and life planning education. Starting from the 2014-2015 school year, each public sector school operating classes at senior secondary levels has been provided with an additional recurrent Career and Life Planning Grant at about \$500,000 per annum to strengthen life planning education with a

view to facilitating students to understand their own career and academic aspirations and make informed decisions in their study and employment.

19. Members had exchanged views with EDB on raising public awareness and recognition towards vocational education. Some members considered that the Administration should draw useful reference from overseas jurisdictions, such as Germany and Switzerland, where a robust system was in place to enable interested students to pursue vocational education in their senior secondary years. The Administration highlighted that whilst reference could be made to overseas experience, other factors specific to Hong Kong, such as the demand for trained manpower of individual industries and the development of the senior secondary curriculum, would also need to be considered.

#### Business-school collaboration

20. Members in general concurred with the importance of strengthening collaboration between industries and vocational training providers, especially in the provision of attachment and practical training.

21. The Administration assured members that all along, it had attached great importance to business-school collaboration. Under the Pilot Scheme implemented by VTC starting from the 2014-2015 academic year, apprenticeship training for targeted industries would be provided to students alongside a guaranteed level of salary and incentive allowance. As informed by EDB, as at February 2015, the electrical & mechanical trades of the construction industry, printing industry, clock & watch industry and automobile industry had joined the Pilot Scheme with 377 apprentices in total. Meanwhile, VTC has also rolled out the Pilot Scheme specifically for the retail industry starting from the 2014-2015 academic year<sup>2</sup>.

#### Support for students with special educational needs ("SEN") and non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") students

22. Members were deeply concerned about the opportunities for SEN students and NCS students to receive vocational education, as well as the support available to them. In the course of its study, the Subcommittee on Integrated Education set up under the Panel noted that VTC had put in place a special admission procedure under which SEN students who met the entrance requirements and assessed to be able to complete the programme during the interview would be offered a place. It was also found that among post-secondary institutions, VTC had a higher intake of SEN students. In fact,

---

<sup>2</sup> See Controlling Officer's Reply Serial No. EDB035 in the Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016.

according to the provisional figures for the 2014-2015 academic year, the total number of SEN students studying in the member institutions of VTC was 955, of which 478 were enrolled in its Youth College. Meanwhile, the total number of NCS students was 970, of which 570 were studying in the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education/Hong Kong Design Institute<sup>3</sup>.

23. As regards concerns about resources for supporting these students, the Administration explained that starting from the 2013-2014 financial year, an additional recurrent funding of \$12 million is allocated to VTC each year for procuring equipment and learning aids necessary for SEN students, providing them with psychological and student counseling services, and enhancing the support for teaching and learning. Besides, VTC established a new Youth College (i.e. Youth College (Yeo Chei Man)) in the 2012-2013 academic year to provide dedicated support for SEN students and NCS students. For the 2015-2016 academic year, the Government has earmarked about \$25.9 million to support the operation of the Youth College (Yeo Chei Man)<sup>4</sup>. NCS students of VTC's pre-employment programmes enjoy various support services such as alternative vocational Chinese modules, counseling and coaching and advisory support for articulation and career development.

24. Concern was raised about the difficulty faced by some SEN students in progressing from the Shine Skills Centre to the Youth College or Chinese Cuisine Training Institute run by VTC due to the more stringent admission requirements of the latter. As the Shine Skills Centre was under the purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB"), members were keen to ensure that the division of policy responsibilities between LWB and EDB should not affect the vocational training opportunities for SEN students. As advised by EDB, it would work closely with VTC and LWB to broaden the articulation pathways for SEN students.

### **Latest position**

25. The Panel will discuss with the Administration issues related to the promotion of vocational education at the meeting on 15 July 2015.

---

<sup>3</sup> See Controlling Officer's Reply Serial No. EDB056 in the Examination of the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016. The total number includes students in publicly-funded and self-financing programmes offered by VTC.

<sup>4</sup> See Controlling Officer's Reply Serial No. EDB056 in the Examination of the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016

**Relevant papers**

26. A list of relevant papers on the website of the Legislative Council is at the **Appendix.**

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
7 July 2015

## List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Subcommittee on Integrated Education	30.9.2014*	<a href="#">Report of the Subcommittee on Integrated Education to the Panel on Education</a>
Panel on Education	8.12.2014 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">CB(4)210/14-15(03)</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">CB(4)294/14-15(01)</a>
Panel on Education	16.1.2015	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">CB(4)358/14-15(01)</a>
Finance Committee	1.4.2015	<a href="#">Administration's replies to members' initial written questions in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016 (Reply serial numbers : EDB035, EDB056, EDB374 and EDB524)</a>

\* Issue date