

**Motion on “Strengthening Vocational Education”
passed by the Legislative Council
at the meeting of 11 November 2015**

Progress Report

The motion on “Strengthening Vocational Education”, moved by Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, as amended by Hon IP Kin-yuen, Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che, Hon POON Siu-ping and Hon KWOK Wai-keung, was passed by the Legislative Council at the meeting of 11 November 2015. The motion invited the Government to further promote and strengthen vocational education. This paper updates Members on the progress of policy initiatives related to vocational education.

Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education

2. Vocational education plays a pivotal role in the education system by providing multiple and flexible pathways for young people with diverse aspirations and abilities. In June 2014, the Government set up the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education (Task Force) with a view to mapping out a strategy to promote vocational education and raise the public awareness of vocational education and recognition of its value. The Task Force has submitted its report to the Government in July 2015, proposing a three-pronged strategy, comprising (a) rebranding vocational education and training, (b) strengthening promotion and (c) sustaining efforts, with a total of 27 recommendations.

2016 Policy Address

3. In the 2016 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the acceptance of all the Task Force’s recommendations and the Government would actively consider how to implement them. Some major recommendations include –

- (a) rebranding “vocational education and training” as “vocational and professional education and training” (VPET), covering relevant programmes up to degree level;
- (b) implementing a series of promotion and publicity activities to promote the professional image of VPET;

- (c) subsidising fully the provision of Applied Learning courses by secondary schools;
- (d) extending the industrial attachment (IA) initiative to benefit students pursuing full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree and undergraduate programmes;
- (e) extending the Pilot Training and Support Scheme (Pilot Scheme) to benefit two more cohorts of 2 000 students in total; and
- (f) supporting major VPET providers in organising large-scale skills competitions.

4. Moreover, the Government will earmark a site in the urban district to develop a Vocational Training Council (VTC) campus with adequate capacity and state-of-the-art facilities to promote the image and quality of VPET.

Ongoing Policy Initiatives

5. In addition to the above, the Government announced a series of measures in the 2014 and 2015 Policy Addresses to strengthen VPET and support its development alongside academic education. The progress of these initiatives is reported as follows.

Pilot Training and Support Scheme

6. VTC has implemented the Pilot Scheme starting from the 2014/15 academic year (AY) to attract and retain talent for specific industries with a keen demand for labour, by integrating structured apprenticeship training programmes and clear career progression pathways. The Pilot Scheme targets Secondary 3 to Secondary 6 school leavers and eligible adult learners and will benefit a total of 2 000 students. Under the Pilot Scheme, apprenticeship training for targeted industries will be provided to students alongside a guaranteed level of salary and incentive allowance. So far, the electrical & mechanical trades of the construction industry, printing, watch & clock, automobile and testing & certification industries have joined the Pilot Scheme. As at September 2015, there were 930 trainees participating in the Pilot Scheme.

7. VTC has earlier conducted a review which indicated that the Scheme is well received by both employers and trainees and therefore the Government decided to extend the Pilot Scheme for two more cohorts to benefit additional 2 000 students in total.

Industrial Attachment

8. With the Government's one-off funding support of \$43 million in the 2012-13 financial year, VTC launched a pilot programme to support IA for student intakes to subvented programmes. The pilot programme indicated that IA could help bridge classroom/workshop instruction and actual workplace requirements and thus greatly enhance students' employment-readiness. Given the encouraging results, recurrent funding of about \$18 million has been allocated to VTC starting from the 2014/15 academic year to provide IA opportunities for about 9 000 students every year.

9. In the 2014/15 AY, over 80% of the attachment places offered to benefiting students were in a field directly relevant to students' programme of study. About 2% of the attachment places also extended beyond Hong Kong, e.g. in the Mainland, Taiwan, etc.

Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP)

10. The Government has implemented SSSDP starting from the 2015/16 AY to subsidise about 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. SSSDP is a pilot scheme for three cohorts of students, and will be subject to review on its effectiveness.

11. The distribution of programmes and their number of subsidised places under SSSDP are determined in consultation with relevant policy bureaux/departments. For the cohort admitted in the 2015/16 AY, SSSDP subsidises a total of 940 places under 13 programmes offered by five institutions; for the 2016/17 cohort, SSSDP will subsidise a total of 1 030 places under 15 programmes offered by six institutions. The selected programmes fall under six disciplines with keen manpower demand, including health care, architecture and engineering, testing and certification, creative industry, logistics, and tourism and hospitality. The list of programmes and the respective number of places subsidised under SSSDP as well as the subsidy amount for the two cohorts of students are at **Annex**.

12. The subsidised places are mainly allocated through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System to ensure that eligible students are selected under a merit-based system. For the 2015/16 cohort, 912 out of 940 subsidised places (i.e. 97%) were filled.

Life Planning Education

13. From the 2014/15 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB) has provided each public sector school operating classes at senior secondary levels with a recurrent Career and Life Planning Grant (CLPG) amounting to about \$500,000 per annum. To allow schools more flexibility in strengthening life planning education and related guidance services, schools may turn the CLPG into regular teaching posts from the 2016/17 school year.

14. To enhance students' understanding of different trades and the related career prospects, EDB has strengthened partnership between schools and business organisations under the Business-School Partnership Programme (BSPP). In the 2014/15 school year, more than 120 organisations have collaborated with EDB in organising over 750 BSPP activities benefitting some 250 000 students. From September 2015 till the end of November 2015, more than 70 BSPP partners have collaborated with us to organise over 220 BSPP activities benefitting more than 26,000 students. EDB will continue to encourage closer collaboration among the relevant stakeholders to arrange more career-related learning activities and taster programmes for secondary school students.

Qualifications Framework Fund

15. Recognising the importance of Qualifications Framework (QF) in maintaining a quality workforce, an endowment fund of \$1 billion, namely the QF Fund, was established on 1 September 2014 to provide a steady source of income to support the sustainable development and implementation of QF. The QF Fund will further encourage relevant stakeholders to participate in QF, thereby supporting the development of VPET.

List of Programmes, Number of Places and Subsidy Amount under the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP) for the 2015/16 and the 2016/17 Cohorts

Institutions	Disciplines	Programmes	Number of subsidised places for the 2015/16 cohort	Number of subsidised places for the 2016/17 cohort	Subsidy amount* (\$)
Caritas Institute of Higher Education	Health Care	Bachelor of Nursing (Honours)	-	60	70,000
Chu Hai College of Higher Education	Architecture and Engineering	Bachelor of Architecture (Honours)	40	-	40,000
	Architecture and Engineering	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Architecture	-	40	40,000
Hang Seng Management College	Logistics	Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) in Supply Chain Management	70	70	40,000
The Open University of Hong Kong	Creative Industry	Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours in Animation and Visual Effects	80	80	70,000
	Health Care	Bachelor of Nursing with Honours in General Health Care	150	150	70,000
	Health Care	Bachelor of Nursing with Honours in Mental Health Care	70	70	70,000
	Testing and Certification	Bachelor of Science with Honours in Testing and Certification	50	50	70,000

Institutions	Disciplines	Programmes	Number of subsidised places for the 2015/16 cohort	Number of subsidised places for the 2016/17 cohort	Subsidy amount* (\$)
Tung Wah College	Health Care	Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) (Nursing Major)	200	200	70,000
Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, Vocational Training Council	Architecture and Engineering	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Landscape Architecture	10	10	40,000
	Architecture and Engineering	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Horticulture and Landscape Management	-	30	40,000
	Architecture and Engineering	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering	60	60	70,000
	Architecture and Engineering	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Environmental Engineering and Management	60	60	70,000
	Creative Industry	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fashion Design	60	60	70,000
	Creative Industry	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Product Design	60	60	70,000
	Tourism and Hospitality	Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Culinary Arts and Management	30	30	40,000

* The unit subsidy will be administered by a two-tier arrangement in which a subsidy of up to \$40,000 is provided to programmes which are not laboratory-based while a higher subsidy of up to \$70,000 is provided to more costly programmes which are laboratory-based. Actual tuition fees paid by the students should reflect the subsidy under SSSDP.