

For discussion on
11 April 2016

Legislative Council Panel on Education
Enhancement of
the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the results of the review of the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme (MUSSS) and enhancements to be introduced to the scheme starting from the 2016/17 academic year.

Background

2. In his 2014 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced a series of initiatives in a bid to provide senior secondary graduates with broader and more diversified further study pathways both in and outside Hong Kong. These include, among others, the introduction of the MUSSS to support needy students to pursue studies under the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions (Admission Scheme)¹.

3. The Government consulted the Education Panel on the eligibility, subsidy level and implementation of the MUSSS on 14 April 2014 vide LC Paper No. CB(4)545/13-14(01). The Finance Committee approved a non-recurrent funding of \$105.3 million on 12 July 2014 (vide FCR(2014-15)15) for implementing the MUSSS to benefit three cohorts of students starting from the 2014/15 academic year (i.e. those entering the first year of undergraduate studies in the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years) and then its effectiveness would be reviewed.

¹ To provide an alternative pathway for Hong Kong students to pursue further studies in the Mainland, the Ministry of Education has implemented the Admission Scheme since the 2012/13 academic year. Under the Scheme, some Mainland higher education institutions will admit Hong Kong students based on their Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) examination results, thus exempting students from taking the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities in the Mainland for Overseas Chinese, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Students (JEE) or any other examinations organised by individual Mainland institutions.

4. The MUSSS was launched on 31 July 2014 to support needy Hong Kong students who will pursue undergraduate studies in the Mainland under the Admission Scheme. As the target recipients of the MUSSS are those students who have been admitted to Mainland institutions under the Admission Scheme, the MUSSS shares the same eligibility as that of the Admission Scheme as follows-

- (a) a holder of Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card or Hong Kong Identity Card;
- (b) a holder of the Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macao Residents; and
- (c) a candidate sitting for the HKDSE examination in the same year as his/her enrolment under the Admission Scheme.

The number of recipients under the MUSSS is not subject to any quota. Students who pass the means test will receive either a full-rate subsidy of \$15,000 or a half-rate subsidy of \$7,500 per student per year, depending on their needs. In line with the arrangement for students admitted to local tertiary institutions, the Working Family and Student Financial Assistant Agency (WFSFAA) is responsible for conducting the means tests for applicants at the time of first application.

5. According to the information provided by the Ministry of Education (MoE), about 3 000 Hong Kong students entered the first year of undergraduate studies in the Mainland annually in recent years, as compared to the 263 and 236 new recipients under the MUSSS in its first two years of operation respectively. To provide Hong Kong students with more opportunity to articulate into undergraduate studies and ensure that they will not be denied access to post-secondary education due to a lack of means, we have advanced the review of MUSSS with a view to expanding its scope to benefit more students studying in the Mainland.

Implementation Progress

6. By now, the MUSSS has already been implemented to support two cohorts of needy Hong Kong students entering the first year of undergraduate studies in Mainland institutions under the Admission Scheme in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years. Details are set out in the following table:

	2014/15 Academic Year	2015/16 Academic Year		
		Newly Approved Applications ² (c)	Subsidy Renewal (d)	Total (c) + (d)
(a) Recipients of full-rate subsidy	152	161	143	304
(b) Recipients of half-rate subsidy	111	75	100	175
(a) + (b) Total number of recipients	263	236	243	479
Total amount of subsidy disbursed	\$3.1 million	\$5.9 million		

7. Breakdowns of the MUSSS recipients by different Mainland institutions, disciplines, duration of undergraduate studies are set out in Annex 1. Funding commitment³ (including the subsidy disbursed in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years, and subsidy to be disbursed in coming years) for all existing recipients amounts to \$25.6 million, on the assumption of their continued receipt of the same level of subsidy covering the normal duration of the programmes concerned.

Review of Scope

8. The existing scope of the MUSSS is to provide means-tested subsidy to those needy Hong Kong students entering the first year of undergraduate studies in Mainland institutions under the Admission Scheme in the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years. In the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years, the number of recipients under the MUSSS accounted for 54% of the total number of students pursuing studies in the Mainland institutions under the Admission Scheme in the same years. As compared to about 30% of local students studying

² Including those entered the first year of undergraduate studies in the Mainland in the 2014/15 academic year but first approved with subsidies under the MUSSS in the 2015/16 academic year.

³ We anticipate that the remaining balance of the non-recurrent funding commitment of \$96.3 million (as at end March 2016) will be sufficient to cover the subsidy disbursement to existing recipients of MUSSS and new applicants entering the first year of undergraduate studies in the 2016/17 academic year who meet the eligibility as set out in paragraph 4 above. This non-recurrent funding commitment will lapse upon completion of studies by these recipients.

post-secondary programmes in Hong Kong receiving means-tested financial assistance from the WFSFAA in the same years, it is believed that the MUSSS has met the objective of providing financial assistance to its target recipients in its first two years of implementation.

9. However, in the course of implementing the MUSSS, we have been receiving calls from parents and students requesting an expansion of the scope of the MUSSS to cover more needy Hong Kong students who are pursuing undergraduate studies as follows:

- (a) those who entered undergraduate studies in Mainland institutions through channels other than the Admission Scheme⁴; and
- (b) those who commenced their undergraduate studies in Mainland institutions before the 2014/15 academic year.

10. According to the information provided by the MoE, the number of Hong Kong students entering the first year of undergraduate studies in Mainland institutions through different channels was over 5 800 in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years. Of them, only 16% were admitted under the Admission Scheme⁵. To better support Hong Kong students to pursue undergraduate studies in the Mainland and ensure that no student will be deprived of post-secondary education opportunity due to a lack of means, there is room for expanding the scope of the MUSSS so as to cover the bulk of needy Hong Kong students who were/will be admitted to undergraduate studies in the Mainland through channels other than the Admission Scheme. Enhancement measures to be introduced to the MUSSS starting from the 2016/17 academic year are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

⁴ According to our understanding, apart from the Admission Scheme, there are two major channels through which Hong Kong students can be admitted to undergraduate studies in Mainland institutions, namely, the JEE and the independent recruitment exercises of individual Mainland institutions. At present, there are six Mainland institutions which are allowed by the Mainland authorities to independently recruit Hon Kong students, namely, the Fudan University, Huaqiao University, Jinan University, Peking University, Sun Yat-sen University and Tsinghua University.

⁵ The number of Hong Kong students admitted to Mainland institutions under the Admission Scheme in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years was 1 535 and 1 444 respectively, whereas final enrolment was 474 and 458 respectively.

Enhancements to be introduced

Expanded Scope

11. The enhanced MUSSS will no longer be restricted to those Hong Kong students admitted to Mainland institutions under the Admission Scheme. It will be expanded to cover all needy Hong Kong students pursuing undergraduate studies in the following categories of Mainland institutions, irrespective of the channels of their admission to the institutions:

- (a) those which have participated in the Admission Scheme. There are 84 Mainland institutions falling under this category in the 2016/17 academic year (see Annex 2); or
- (b) those which fall under “Project 985”⁶ and/or “Project 211”⁷ of the Mainland authorities. At present, there are 112 higher education institutions falling under this category, including 41 institutions which have participated in the Admission Scheme above.

12. The reason for confining the scope of the enhanced MUSSS to cover only those Mainland institutions set out in the foregoing paragraph is to ensure the quality of the undergraduate programmes undertaken by the recipients of the scheme. Apart from a few sports and art-related programmes, the Admission Scheme adopts a general minimum entrance requirement for admission of “3,3,2,2”⁸ which is the same as that for entering undergraduate programmes in Hong Kong institutions. Mainland institutions participating in the Admission Scheme are generally expected to adopt similar entrance requirement in admitting Hong Kong students through other channels. As for Mainland institutions falling under “Project 985” and/or “Project 211”, they are widely regarded as the first tier of quality universities in the Mainland. “Project 985” was first taken forward by the Central People’s Government in 1998 by allocating large amounts of funding to certain top

⁶ A list of the 39 Mainland institutions falling under “Project 985” is available at http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s6183/201112/xxgk_128833.html. All of them also fall under “Project 211”.

⁷ A list of the 112 Mainland institutions falling under “Project 211” is available at http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s238/201002/xxgk_82762.html.

⁸ That is, attaining Level 3 in Chinese Language and English Language and Level 2 in Mathematics and Liberal Studies for HKDSE candidates.

notch universities to turn them into world-class universities. As regards “Project 211”, it was initiated in 1995 by the MoE with the intent of raising the quality and standard of teaching, research, management and programmes of certain higher education institutions, so that they became the base of nurturing talents and cultivating strategies for socio-economic development. It is noteworthy that all those Mainland institutions set out in the foregoing paragraph are also listed in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Mainland and Hong Kong on Mutual Recognition of Academic Degrees in Higher Education for the purpose of further studies.

13. Pursuant to paragraph 11(a) and (b) above, a total of 155 Mainland institutions will be covered under the enhanced MUSSS in the 2016/17 academic year, including 84 Mainland institutions participating in the Admission Scheme and another 71 Mainland institutions under “Project 985” and/or “Project 211” not having participated in the Admission Scheme. Lists of the relevant institutions are at Annexes 2 and 3 respectively. According to our understanding, about 95% of the Hong Kong students who entered the first year of undergraduate studies in Mainland institutions in the 2015/16 academic year actually went to these 155 institutions. In addition, the enhanced MUSSS will be open to those who have commenced their studies before 2014/15 academic year as long as they are still studying in the relevant institutions as well as those Hong Kong sub-degree graduates to be articulated to top-up degree programmes offered by Huaqiao University under a two-year pilot scheme to be introduced in the 2016/17 academic year. It is therefore envisaged that the expanded MUSSS will benefit the bulk of needy Hong Kong students pursuing undergraduate studies in the Mainland.

Broadened Eligibility

14. To be eligible for the enhanced MUSSS, a student will have to satisfy the following criteria:

- (a) having right of abode or right to land in, or have entered Hong Kong on One-way Permits;
- (b) receiving senior secondary education in Hong Kong, including those studying local and non-local curricula in Hong Kong; and
- (c) pursuing undergraduate studies in a Mainland institution which is covered under paragraph 11(a) and (b) above in the same year of its application under the enhanced MUSSS.

In other words, eligibility of the enhanced MUSSS will no longer be restricted to students sitting for the HKDSE examination and holders of Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macau Residents as under the Admission Scheme. As a result, students undertaking non-local curricula in their secondary education as well as non-Chinese speaking students will become eligible to apply for the means-test subsidy under the enhanced MUSSS.

Implementation of Enhanced MUSSS

15. To provide needy Hong Kong students with continued support for pursuing undergraduate study in the Mainland thereby maintaining broader and more diversified articulation pathways for our senior secondary graduates, the enhanced MUSSS will be introduced starting from 2016/17 academic year. Sufficient provision has been reserved for the 2016/17 to 2018/19 academic years.

16. Apart from the enhancements set out in paragraphs 11 to 14 above, the enhanced MUSSS will be implemented in the same mode and manner as the existing MUSSS. Eligible students who wish to apply for the means-tested subsidy to cover their undergraduate studies in the Mainland in the 2016/17 academic year will be invited to submit applications from June to August 2016. In anticipation of a significant increase in the number of target recipients and hence the number of applications to be received under the enhanced MUSSS, processing of the applications, including means tests conducted by the WFSFAA and certification of the status of eligible students upon application, may take four to six months to complete. Our target is to notify all applicants of the application results and arrange disbursement of the subsidy to those successful applicants in the first quarter of 2017.

17. In terms of subsidy levels, the current levels (i.e. full-rate subsidy of \$15,000 and half-rate subsidy of \$7,500 per student per year) were determined in 2014 taking into account study-related expenses⁹ in the Mainland institutions including tuition fee, hostel fee, insurance, communications, travel and other living expenses. We have compared the tuition fee and hostel fee to be charged by some popular Mainland institutions in the 2016/17 academic year with those in the 2014/15 academic year, and find that the fees remain more or less at the same level. The current subsidy levels should therefore be adequate to meet the needs of individual students in general in the 2016/17 academic year.

⁹ According to our understanding, Hong Kong students pursuing undergraduate studies in the Mainland institutions generally pay the same tuition and hostel fees as their Mainland counterparts.

The levels will be subject to review and adjustment taking into account price adjustment of the study-related expenses thereafter.

Advice Sought

18. Members are invited to note this paper.

Education Bureau
April 2016

**Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme
Breakdowns of Recipients**

(A) By Mainland Institution

Institution	Total Number of Recipients	
	2014/15 Academic Year	2015/16 Academic Year¹
Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology	1	2
Beijing Language and Culture University	2	4
Beijing Normal University	7	11
Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai	3	8
Beijing University of Chinese Medicine	15	29
Central China Normal University	3	4
Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine	1	1
China Three Gorges University	-	1
China University of Geosciences(Wuhan)	-	3
China University of Political Science and Law	11	21
Communication University of China	3	5
Donghua University	2	5
East China Normal University	1	2
East China University of Political Science and Law	2	3
East China University of Science And Technology	3	5
Fudan University	1	1
Fuzhou University	2	3
Guangdong Pharmaceutical University	1	-
Guangdong University of Foreign Studies	3	6
Guangdong University of Technology	1	1
Guangzhou University	6	6
Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine	60	103

¹ Including both newly approved applications and subsidy renewal.

Institution	Total Number of Recipients	
	2014/15 Academic Year	2015/16 Academic Year ¹
Huaqiao University	6	10
Hunan Normal University	3	7
Jimei University	-	2
Jinan University	11	24
Nanjing Normal University	3	7
Nanjing University	2	4
Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine	1	1
Nankai University	1	3
Peking University	-	1
Renmin University of China	4	12
Shandong University	19	18
Shanghai International Studies University	1	5
Shanghai Jiao Tong University	-	3
Shanghai University of Finance and Economics	1	1
Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine	5	7
Shantou University	1	2
Shaoguan University	-	1
Shenzhen University	7	11
Sichuan University	6	9
Sichuan Normal University	-	1
South China Normal University	3	6
South China University of Technology	1	1
Southern Medical University	4	6
Southwest University	3	11
Southwest University of Political Science and Law	4	4
Sun Yat-sen University	21	34
The Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts	1	1
Tianjin University	1	2
Tianjin Normal University	-	1
Tongji University	-	4
Tsinghua University	-	1

Institution	Total Number of Recipients	
	2014/15 Academic Year	2015/16 Academic Year ¹
University of International Business and Economics	2	3
Wuhan University	5	10
Xiamen University	7	19
Xinghai Conservatory of Music	6	6
Yunnan University	1	2
Zhejiang University	2	3
Zhejiang Sci-Tech University	-	4
Zhongnan University of Economics and Law	3	8
Total:	263	479

(B) By Discipline

Discipline	Total Number of Recipients	
	2014/15 Academic Year	2015/16 Academic Year ¹
Architecture	3	7
Arts	41	78
Business, Economics and Finance	41	83
Chinese Medicine	83	140
Communications and Journalism	9	24
Dentistry, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	11	27
Design	9	19
Education	6	10
Engineering	5	12
Law	19	33
Performing Arts	7	8
Politics and Public Administration	7	11
Science	12	14
Others	10	13
Total:	263	479

(C) By Duration of Undergraduate Studies

Duration	Total Number of Recipients	
	2014/15 Academic Year	2015/16 Academic Year¹
Four years	165	304
Five years	98	175
Total:	263	479

**Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to
Mainland Higher Education Institutions
in the 2016/17 Academic Year**

List of Participating Institutions

Beijing Municipality

Beijing Foreign Studies University#
Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology
Beijing Language and Culture University
Beijing Normal University*
Beijing University of Chinese Medicine#
China University of Political Science and Law#
Communication University of China#
Peking University*
Renmin University of China*
Tsinghua University*
University of International Business and Economics#

Chongqing Municipality

Chongqing University*
Southwest University#
Southwest University of Political Science and Law

Fujian Province

Fujian Normal University
Fujian University of Traditional Chinese Medicine
Fuzhou University#
Huaqiao University
Jimei University
Xiamen University*

Guangdong Province

Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai
Jinan University#
Guangdong University of Finance
Guangdong University of Finance and Economics
Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
Guangdong University of Technology
Guangdong Medical College
Guangzhou Medical University

Guangdong Pharmaceutical University
Guangzhou University
Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine
Shantou University
Shaoguan University
Shenzhen University
South China Normal University#
South China University of Technology*
Southern Medical University
Sun Yat-sen University*
The Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts
Xinghai Conservatory of Music
Zhaoqing University

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

Guangxi Medical University
Guangxi Normal University
Guangxi University#
Guangxi University Chinese Medicine

Hubei Province

Central China Normal University#
China Three Gorges University
China University of Geosciences(Wuhan)#
Hubei University of Chinese Medicine
Wuhan University*
Zhongnan University of Economics and Law#

Hunan Province

Hunan Normal University#

Jiangsu Province

Nanjing Normal University#
Nanjing University*
Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine

Jiangxi Province

Jiangxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine
Nanchang University#

Shandong Province

Shandong University*

Shanghai Municipality

Donghua University#
East China Normal University*
East China University of Political Science and Law
East China University of Science And Technology#
Fudan University*
Shanghai International Studies University#
Shanghai Jiao Tong University*
Shanghai Normal University
Shanghai University#
Shanghai University of Finance and Economics#
Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine
Tongji University*

Sichuan Province

Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine
Sichuan Normal University
Sichuan University*

Tianjin Municipality

Nankai University*
Tianjin Normal University
Tianjin University*
Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Yunnan Province

Yunnan Normal University
Yunnan University#

Zhejiang Province

Ningbo University
Wenzhou Medical University
Zhejiang Chinese Medical University
Zhejiang Sci-Tech University
Zhejiang University*

(84 institutions in total)

* Institutions falling under “Project 985” and “Project 211”.

Institutions falling under “Project 211” only.

**List of Mainland Institutions of “Project 985” and/or “Project 211”
Not Having Participated in
the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to
Mainland Higher Education Institutions
in the 2016/17 Academic Year**

Anhui University#
Beihang University*
Beijing Forestry University#
Beijing Institute of Technology*
Beijing Jiaotong University#
Beijing Sport University#
Beijing University of Chemical Technology#
Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications#
Beijing University of Technology#
Central Conservatory of Music#
Central South University*
Central University of Finance and Economics#
Changan University#
China Agricultural University*
China Pharmaceutical University#
China University of Mining and Technology#
China University of Petroleum#
Dalian Maritime University#
Dalian University of Technology*
Guizhou University#
Hainan University#
Harbin Engineering University#
Harbin Institute of Technology*
Hebei University of Technology#
Hefei University of Technology#
Hohai University#
Huazhong Agricultural University#
Huazhong University of Science & Technology*
Hunan University*
Inner Mongolia University#
Jiangnan University#
Jilin University*
Lanzhou University*

Liaoning University#
Minzu University of China*
Nanjing Agricultural University#
Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics#
Nanjing University of Science and Technology#
National University of Defense Technology*
Ningxia University#
North China Electric Power University#
Northeast Agricultural University#
Northeast Forestry University#
Northeast Normal University#
Northeastern University*
Northwest A&F University*
Northwest University#
Northwestern Polytechnical University*
Ocean University of China*
Qinghai University#
Shaanxi Normal University#
Shihezi University#
Sichuan Agricultural University#
Soochow University#
Southeast University*
Southwest Jiaotong University#
Southwestern University of Finance and Economics#
Tai Yuan University of Technology#
The Fourth Military Medical University#
The Second Military Medical University#
Tianjin Medical University#
Tibet University#
University of Electronic Science and Technology of China*
University of Science and Technology Beijing#
University of Science and Technology of China*
Wuhan University of Technology#
Xian Jiaotong University*
Xidian University#
Xinjiang University#
Yanbian University#
Zhengzhou University#

(71 institutions in total)

* Institutions falling under “Project 985” and “Project 211”.
Institutions falling under “Project 211” only.