

**Submission of the Quality Assurance Council on
Quality Audits on Sub-degree Operations of
the University Grants Committee-funded Universities
to Panel of Education of the Legislative Council**

Currently, there are three quality assurance (QA) bodies in Hong Kong responsible for monitoring the quality of the post-secondary education sector. They are -

- (i) *Quality Assurance Council (QAC)*, whose current audit activities cover first degree programmes and above, however funded, offered in University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities;
- (ii) *Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)*, a statutory body responsible for the QA of programmes at all levels offered by post-secondary institutions with the exception of UGC-funded universities since they are fully self-accredited;
- (iii) *Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC)*, established by the Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) and provides peer review of the QA processes of self-financing sub-degree programmes offered by UGC-funded universities.

UGC recommended in its Report on Higher Education Review 2010 that a single QA body for the entire post-secondary sector should be set up. While the Government is open-minded towards the idea of a single QA body, balancing the mixed views of the stakeholders, the Government considers that incremental measures should be adopted in the meantime to enhance our QA mechanism, introduce an element of external overview, and ensure coherence.

To address the public's aspiration for external QA for the self-financing operations of the UGC-funded universities, the Government has decided that periodic external quality audits should be conducted on the sub-degree operations of the UGC-funded universities. Against such background, a working group comprising representatives from UGC, HUCOM and HKCAAVQ has been formed to plan for and oversee external quality audits on the sub-degree operations concerned.

The working group completed its deliberation and made its recommendation to the Education Bureau (EDB) in June 2015. EDB has considered the working group's recommendations on the framework and the long term mechanism for the external quality audits, and decided to endorse the recommendations in full. In particular, EDB has given policy support for UGC to be the overseeing body of the quality audits and QAC as the body conducting audits, with active participation of HKCAAVQ in the formulation of the audit manual and the nomination of suitable external experts and with involvement of its staff with experience in quality assurance and the work of the HKCAAVQ (to be appointed on an ad personam basis) to be member(s) of the audit panels. QAC should also tap on the experience of HKCAAVQ and JQRC to ensure consistency and coherence in standards.

With the agreement of UGC and QAC to taking on the responsibility, preparation for the conduct of the external quality audit, the formulation of the audit manual, is underway, with a view to commencing the audit cycle in end 2016.

Quality Assurance Council
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