



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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2 May 2019

Ms Angel Wong
Clerk to Panel on Education
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Wong,

**RE: Panel on Education
Follow-up to the meeting on 1 March 2019**

I refer to your letter of 6 March 2019 to the Secretary for Education regarding follow-up to the Panel on Education meeting held on 1 March 2019. Our response to items (c) and (d) under the subject “Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education” is set out below.

**Review of Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) and
Response to the following Motion moved by Dr Hon Fernando
CHEUNG Chiu-hung:**

**The existing Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320),
unlike the ordinances of the eight publicly-funded
universities, does not expressly provide for a participatory
governance framework (e.g. courts, councils, etc.) involving**

students, teachers, alumni and other stakeholders. As a result, there are problems such as lacking transparency in the operation of institutions, not making decisions from students' perspective and so on. Hence, this Panel urges the Government to include provisions to the effect that students, teachers, alumni and other stakeholders can participate in the governance of institutions when reviewing the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance so as to ensure students can really take part in decision making on institution policies.

The Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education already agrees that there is a need to review and update the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) with a view to enabling the self-financing post-secondary education institutions in Hong Kong to achieve the academic and institutional governance expected of a modern higher education institution. The Government is now considering the way forward.

Non-means-tested Study Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong (NMTSS) and Response to the following Motion moved by Dr Hon AU Nok-hin:

This Panel urges the Government to extend the \$30,000 voucher scheme for self-financing undergraduate studies to students pursuing self-financing programmes offered by the eight publicly-funded universities so as to alleviate students' pressure on tuition fees.

While NMTSS was introduced to alleviate the financial burden of eligible students enrolling in self-financing undergraduate programmes, it is also one of the dedicated measures to enable self-financing post-secondary institutions to compete on a relatively level playing field with UGC-funded institutions which, in operating self-financing programmes, had an advantage over the former owing to factors such as the brand name and availability of facilities for shared use. EDB has no plan to alter the coverage of NMTSS at this stage. Notwithstanding, eligible students enrolling in any post-secondary programmes in need of financial assistance can still apply for various student grants/loans.

Sub-degree Education and Articulation Opportunities and Response to the following Motion moved by Hon SHIU Ka-chun:

At present, functions of associate degree (“AD”) programmes are unclear, opportunities for articulation to undergraduate programmes are insufficient, and UGC-funded senior year places have failed to meet the needs of eligible AD students. This Panel urges the Education Bureau to revisit the functions of AD programmes and increase the number of UGC-funded senior year articulation places so as to broaden local students’ opportunities to learn and develop.

The Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education has recommended that the positioning of Associate Degree and Higher Diploma qualifications should be more sharply differentiated. Associate Degree qualification should be positioned as primarily preparing students for articulation to general degree programmes; and Higher Diploma qualification should be positioned as preparing students for either immediate employment at para-professional level in relevant industries and professions, or articulation to specialised professional degree programmes. To further enhance the quality of sub-degree education, the Government should conduct a more focused study to review and improve the structure and curriculum of Associate Degree and Higher Diploma education to reflect their respective refined positioning within the higher education sector in Hong Kong. When operators have suitably enhanced the structure and curriculum of Associate Degree and Higher Diploma qualifications, it will be opportune for the Government to revisit the positioning and value of these two sub-degree qualifications with a view to ensuring they will continue to serve their purposes and contribute to the development of Hong Kong’s higher education.

The Government is considering the Task Force’s recommendations, including the proposed follow-up actions concerning the positioning of Associate Degree and Higher Diploma education.

The number of UGC-funded senior year places has increased to 5 000 per annum starting from the 2018/19 academic year. Together with the top up degree places offered by the self-financing sector (about 10 000 in the 2018/19 academic year), there should be ample supply of places to meet the demand of sub-degree graduates for articulation (students enrolling in self-financing top up degree programmes are also eligible for subsidies under the NMTSS). For the time being, we

consider it prudent to maintain the number of publicly-funded senior year places pending future review of sub-degree education and further assessment on the demand for top-up degree places by sub-degree graduates following the review.

Student Admission of Self-financing Post-secondary Programmes and Response to the following Motion moved by Hon CHAN Chi-chuen:

In view of the need of working adults in Hong Kong for further studies, this Panel urges the Government to consider reviewing and relaxing the admission requirements of self-financing post-secondary institutions for working adults, such as considering work experience and interview performance for admission. In order to give working adults opportunities for further studies, institutions should be encouraged to offer them more part-time programmes and Student Finance Office should provide them with financial assistance including loans. Moreover, the arrangement of relaxing the admission quota of self-financing institutions for students from the Greater Bay Area should be shelved before local needs have been addressed.

Both publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary institutions enjoy a high degree of autonomy and academic freedom, including student admission and programme development.

Meeting local needs and relaxing the admission quota of self-financing institutions for students from the Greater Bay Area are not mutually exclusive. The Government will continue to provide the support and assistance needed by Hong Kong residents to pursue higher education with the objective of meeting Hong Kong's manpower needs. Apart from the NMTSS introduced in 2017, the Government has, amongst others, increased the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP) places from 1,000 to 3,000 per cohort since the 2017/18 academic year and will expand the SSSDP to cover sub-degree programmes which meet our social and economic development need for talents starting from the 2019/2020 academic year. A total of 2,000 places per cohort will be offered. We understand that it is a common feature among many self-financing post-secondary programmes that application by working adults is accepted, and each application would be considered on its own merits. To encourage working adults in designated industries to pursue higher qualifications,

the Government has launched a Pilot Subsidy Scheme for Students of Professional Part-time Programmes to provide tuition fee subsidy for a total of 5 600 students in three cohorts from the 2016/17 academic year admitted to designated professional part-time programmes offered by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) in the disciplines of construction, engineering and technology. As announced in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address, the Government will continue to implement the Pilot Scheme for three more cohorts from the 2019/20 to 2021/22 academic years, benefitting another 5 600 students admitted to the above programmes. The scope of the Pilot Scheme will also be expanded to cover creative industry programmes offered by the VTC, providing tuition fee subsidy to 2 500 practitioners in the creative industry. Furthermore, the Government also supports working adults to pursue further education through such measures as the Extended Non-means-tested Loan Scheme and the Continuing Education Fund. At the same time, with a reducing secondary school student population, the self-financing post-secondary sector has the capacity to admit a higher percentage of non-local students than they presently do while not departing from their primary mission of satisfying the educational needs of local students. This is also in line with our policy to promote Hong Kong as a regional higher education hub.

At present, self-financing institutions are free to admit non-local students but the maximum enrolment of Mainland, Macau and Taiwan students in full-time locally accredited self-financing local programmes at sub-degree and undergraduate levels in an institution in a particular academic year is 10% of the actual total student enrolment in all such programmes provided by the institution in the preceding academic year (i.e. the 10% quota). To further promote Hong Kong as a regional higher education hub, EDB has been exploring the feasibility of relaxing the 10% quota and possible relaxation in admitting students from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.

For enquiries, please contact the undersigned at 3509 8502.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Elaine Mak)
for Secretary for Education