

Letterhead of UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE

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7 April 2000

The Honourable Margaret Ng
Chairman
Panel on Administration of Justice
and Legal Services
The Legislative Council
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Ng,

Thank you for your letter of 24 March 2000 regarding public funding for PCLL courses. I am also concerned that recently there has been some misunderstanding about the UGC's position with respect to PCLL courses. I should therefore like to take this opportunity to clarify my Committee's stance.

My Committee has for some time been urging the institutions under its aegis to consider the possibility of offering more taught postgraduate (TPg) programmes/courses on a wholly or largely self-financing basis, where feasible and particularly where there is a clear element of private as distinct from public investment.

The only more specific advice on TPg programmes given by the UGC recently to the Administration (and so far only informally to the institutions) is that most, if not all, of the MBA programmes which are still offered by the UGC-funded institutions on a publicly-funded basis, should be phased out by the end of the next triennium (i.e. 2004), thereby freeing up publicly funded places to support for example Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate in Education (PGDE/PGCE) programmes proposed by the institutions for the next triennium and specifically requested by the Government as a matter of public policy.

My Committee considers that it should be mainly for the institutions to determine the distinction between private and public investment in this context, subject to the UGC's overall advice referred to above and subject to the institutions' student number targets being met.

As you may know, PCLL courses have been offered in both publicly-funded and largely self-funding modes by HKU since 1991. Moreover, we understand that CityU is also planning to introduce an additional PCLL course in self-financing mode in September this year.

It is appreciated that publicly-funded and self-funding PCLL programmes may serve somewhat different purposes. Moreover, my Committee is mindful of the review of legal education being conducted by the Advisory Committee on Legal Education and accordingly has no plan specifically to recommend any changes in the future status of existing PCLL courses. My Committee will also take into account the outcome of the review and the advice of the Government in future planning of academic programmes in law and professional legal education. Nevertheless, given the obvious strength of opinion of the legal profession on this issue, I will draw the content of your and similar letters from the profession to the attention of my Committee in our meeting in April 2000.

Yours sincerely,

(Alice Lam)
Chairman
University Grants Committee

c.c. SEM