

**Report to the
LegCo Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services**

Review of Legal Education

This paper serves to summarize the progress made in respect of the proposed comprehensive review of legal education and training since the special meeting of the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services on 5 June 1999.

2. A Working Group on the Review of Legal Education had been set up. Its first meeting was held on 17 July 1999, and five meetings have been held to date. The present composition of the Working Group is attached at Annex A.

3. The terms of reference of the Working Group are:

“To help establish a Panel to carry out a comprehensive review of legal education, including advising on-

- (a) the scope of the review;
- (b) the composition and terms of reference of the Review Panel;
- (c) the possible methodology and time frame for the review; and
- (d) the likely cost of the review and sources of funding.”

4. The Working Group has agreed that the review of legal education should be carried out in two stages, namely, a consultancy stage followed by a further study by a Review Panel. Throughout both stages, the Working Group will act as Steering Committee to oversee the work being done.

5. The consultancy in the first stage will be mainly financed by the SSF grant. The application for funding was originally made by the Law Society, but it has been agreed that the Bar Association and the two Universities will be co-applicants. It has also been agreed that two consultants will be employed rather than one.

6. The consultancy will most probably begin in January next year, and be completed by February 2001. It will provide key information on the current system, alternative models for reform, and the views of interested parties, and will make recommendations. Either in parallel with this study or after it, a survey will be conducted to assess the manpower needs of the legal profession in the future, and the evolving nature of legal services needed.

7. The Working Group has agreed on the terms of reference as set out in Annex B for the consultancy, subject to further discussion with the consultants. The Law Society has already begun negotiations about the consultancy with experts whom had been nominated by the Working Group, and the Working Group is hopeful that the consultants would be appointed soon. The appointment of consultants will be made by the Law Society on behalf to Steering Committee, and the consultants will be required to report to the Steering Committee.

8. After the consultancy is finished, it is intended to establish a high-powered Review Panel consisting of 4-5 local and overseas experts (but no representative from the legal profession or Universities). This Panel will consider the report of the consultants, and any other material it sees fit, and make final recommendations. Funding for this second stage will be sought in due course.

Department of Justice
October 1999

Composition of the Working Group on Review of Legal Education

Mr Robert Allcock	Solicitor General (Ag.)	(Chairman)
Mr Clive Grossman, SC	Council Member, Hong Kong Bar Association	
Mr Alan K K Leong, SC	Council Member, Hong Kong Bar Association	
Mr Anthony Chow	President, Law Society of Hong Kong	
Mr Patrick Moss	Secretary-General, Law Society of Hong Kong	
Ms Margaret Hill	Director of Standards and Development, Law Society of Hong Kong	
Mr Lester Huang	Council Member, Law Society of Hong Kong	
Professor Albert Chen	Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong	
Mr David Smith	Acting Dean, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong	
Mr Wilfred Tsui	Judiciary Administrator	
Mr Harry Mak	Deputy Director of Legal Aid	
Ms Michelle Li	Principal Assistant Secretary, Education and Manpower Bureau	
Mr Dominic Lai	Senior Government Counsel	(Secretary)

Terms of Reference

1. The aim of the preliminary review is, in the light of best international practice and having regard to the unique characteristics of Hong Kong :
 - (a) to assess the current system of legal education and training in Hong Kong, including an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses;
 - (b) to advise on the requirements of a legal education and training system best capable of meeting the challenges of legal practice and the needs of Hong Kong society into the 21st century and how these challenges and needs can be met by the legal education and training system;
 - (c) to provide a set of benchmarks for measuring the quality and standard of legal education and training in Hong Kong so as to ensure that those entering the legal profession receive the best legal training for the maintenance or improvement of professional standards;
 - (d) to provide suggestions and alternative models for a reformed system of legal education and training in Hong Kong; and
 - (e) to make recommendations for improvements in the system of legal education and training in Hong Kong, including reforms of the existing system or the introduction of an alternative model.

2. The preliminary review will encompass :
 - (a) all stages of the legal education and training of legal professionals in Hong Kong, including the detailed components and content of undergraduate education, vocational training (including articles and pupillage as well as the professional stage of university legal education) and post qualification continuing legal education; and
 - (b) legal education for those persons who intend to pursue a career in areas other than legal practice.