

For discussion on 4 November 1999

Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Education and Training Opportunities for Young School Leavers with Secondary 3 Education

INTRODUCTION

In response to Members' request at the Panel meeting held on 28 October 1999, this paper presents –

- (a) an overview of the education and training opportunities available to school leavers who have completed Secondary 3 education; and
- (b) details of the training courses offered by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) for this group of youths.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECONDARY 3 GRADUATES

2. A predominant share of the education and training opportunities for young people who have completed Secondary 3 education are the Secondary 4 places offered by our schools and the pre-employment training courses offered by the VTC. In addition, both the Construction Industry Training Authority (CITA) and the Clothing Industry Training Authority (CLITA) offer training courses for people who have completed Secondary 3 education.

3. For example, in the case of the 1998/99 school year, there were 81 413 students who had completed Secondary 3 education in the summer of 1998. Based on the enrolment and post-school career surveys conducted by the Education Department, we estimated that of the 81 413 students, 73 135 (89.8%) proceeded to Secondary 4 classes, 5 380 (6.6%) pursued other education/training opportunities, and 2 898 (3.6%) discontinued full-time study

upon graduation. A detailed breakdown is as follows -

	Education/Training Places for S.3 graduates (1998/99)	Actual status of S.3 graduates in 1998/99
No. of students who completed S.3 education the previous school year (1997/98)	81 413	
S.4 places	78 332	73 135(89.8%)
Repeated S.3		1 397 (1.7%)
VTC places with "completion of S.3" as minimum requirement	4 596	2 033 (2.5%)
CITA places with "completion of S.3" as minimum requirement	1 540	1 513 (1.9%)
CLITA places with "completion of S.3" as minimum requirement	60	32 (0.04%)
Overseas Study/Other full-time courses		405 (0.5%)
Sub-Total		78 515 (96.4%)
Discontinue full-time study (i.e. enter into employment, unemployed and/or study part-time courses)		2 898 (3.6%)
Total	84 528	81 413

Note: the above statistics may vary from year to year and should not be regarded as precise. Also, they only cover formal courses and exclude part-time continuing education programmes offered by local and non-local institutions.

COURSES OFFERED BY THE VTC FOR S.3 GRADUATES

Courses offered by the VTC training centres

4. Through its network of training centres, the VTC offers a variety of training courses for young people with a minimum of Secondary 3 education. These courses are summarized below -

Craft Foundation Course (CFC) / Basic Craft Course (BCC)

5. These are one-year full-time courses providing trainees with sound basic craft training for employment in specific trades. Following a revamp of the course structure, the CFCs have been renamed as the BCCs in 1999/2000. Under the new format, BCC trainees receive four days of practical training and one day of complementary technical education per week. With effect from 2000/01, both the practical training and technical education will be conducted in VTC's training centres. On completion of training, trainees will be exempted from the first year of apprenticeship in the relevant trade. With the decline in demand for craftsman by some trades and the relatively low level of job placement, the VTC has reduced the CFC/BCC training places from 3 368 in 1998/99 to 1 802 in 1999/2000.

Basic pre-employment training in hotel/catering/welding/seamanship

6. The VTC's Hotel Industry Training Centre provides courses for young people to join the hotel and catering industry. While the minimum entry qualification is completion of Secondary 3, the hotel-related training courses have been recruiting trainees with a minimum age of 17 1/2 years to cater for the employment market demand. The total training places offered by the Hotel Industry Training Centre in 1998/99 and 1999/2000 are 750 and 650 respectively.

7. The VTC's Welding Training Centre runs a Basic Welding Operation Course to train people for welding operative jobs. The course is of 15-week duration. In 1998/99 and 1999/2000, 90 and 75 training places are offered respectively.

8. The VTC's Seamen's Training Centre operates a Junior General

Purpose Rating Course which is of 23-week duration. Due to statutory requirements, trainees are required to be at least 17 years of age so that they can enter the maritime industry on completion of training. 48 places are available each year.

Courses offered by the VTC's Institute of Vocational Education (IVE)

9. The IVE offers two categories of courses for students who have completed Secondary 3 education, namely, the one-year certificate courses in basic commercial studies, basic optics and clock and watch repair; and the new Certificate in Vocational Studies (CVS) course. In 1999/2000, 220 and 800 training places respectively in the two categories of courses are offered by IVE.

10. The new CVS course has been launched by the VTC in 1999/2000 to offer 800 places for students who have completed Secondary 3 education.¹ The CVS is a two-year full-time programme and seeks to strike a balance between general education and vocational training in order to make the graduates more employable. There are two separate streams, one for the services sector and one for the engineering sector. About 60% of the course is based on a common curriculum to equip students with skills in language, communication and IT application. Graduates of the CVS Course may progress to technician level courses offered by the VTC.

11. For easy comparison, the training places offered by the VTC for Secondary 3 graduates in 1998/99 and 1999/2000 are summarized in the following table -

	1998/99	1999/2000
Craft Foundation Course (renamed as the Basic Craft Course w.e.f. 1999/2000)	3 368	1 802
Basic pre-employment training in hotel/catering/welding/seamanship	888	773

¹ Another 600 places are available under a three-year part-time format.

Other craft courses offered by the former Technical Institutes /IVE	340	220
Certificate in Vocational Studies (introduced in 1999/2000)		800
Total	4 596	3 595

12. Whilst the training places available to Secondary 3 school leavers in 1999/2000 have been reduced, the VTC has redeployed resources to other areas which the industry and the community have a high demand. These are -

- (a) The new Foundation Diploma Course for students who have obtained three passes in the HKCEE. The course is a one-year full-time course with an annual capacity of 2 000 places.
- (b) The trade testing capacity in the electrical and mechanical/building services fields have been increased from 1 000 to 1 600 each year.
- (c) The training capacity for LPG taxi repair has been expanded from 180 in 1998 to 400 in 1999.
- (d) Provision of training at the technician level (as distinct from the craft level) in the Technician Foundation Course offered by VTC's training centres has increased from 154 places in 1998/99 to 236 in 1999/2000. The increase is mainly in the jewellery and plastics trades.

13. The new Foundation Diploma Course is considered particularly useful as it provides further study opportunities for those students who have relatively underachieved in their secondary school studies. More importantly, it will help enhance their employability through the upgrading of their generic skills, especially communication and IT skills, and through helping them to develop positive attitudes. All these are essential in the world of work and are the attributes required by employers. The VTC has launched the Foundation Diploma Course through redeployment of resources.

New initiatives for S.3 Graduates in the pipeline

14. Whilst the new Foundation Diploma Course will help Secondary 5 school leavers, the VTC is mindful of the need to proceed in parallel with additional training programmes for the Secondary 3 school leavers. The following is a summary of the new initiatives proposed by the VTC for implementation in 2000/01-

- (a) Commencing in end 2000, professional training in Chinese cuisine will be provided by the new Chinese Cuisine Training Institute. The training capacity for new entrants to the industry will be 30 in 1999/2000 and will increase to 105 by 2003/04.
- (b) An additional intake of 300 trainees for the 44-week basic pre-employment training for the food, catering and hospitality industries is being planned by the Hotel Industry Training Centre.
- (c) An additional annual intake of 310 trainees at the craft level in the electrical and mechanical, building services and lift maintenance fields is being planned.

The VTC will also review the demand for the new CVS course to see if there is a need to expand the training capacity for 2000/01.

THE YOUTH PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAMME

15. As noted in paragraph 3 above, each year there are close to 3 000 students who would discontinue full-time study upon completing Secondary 3 education. The Government is very concerned about the employment prospects of young school leavers. To address the issue, the Government has initiated a six-month Youth Pre-employment Training Programme in September 1999. The objective of the Programme is to enhance the competitiveness and employability of young school leavers aged mainly between 15 – 19 through the provision of a wide range of employment-related training in the areas of (a) leadership, self-discipline and team building, (b) job search and interpersonal skills, (c) basic computer application, and (d) job specific skills; as well as short-term workplace attachment opportunities.

16. The Programme has the capacity to provide 25 000 training places. In addition, over 12 000 workplace attachment places have been secured from various organizations including private sector employers, social service organizations and government departments. About 18 000 applications were received and as at end October, 6 000 trainees have completed or are currently undergoing training. Of the 18 000 applicants, slightly more than 2 300 are with Secondary 3 education.

17 Upon completion of the Programme in March 2000, we will conduct a review to see how best to equip school leavers in the 15 – 19 age group with pre-employment training before they enter the labour market.

Education and Manpower Bureau / Vocational Training Council
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