

## Self-financing post-secondary education

Figure 1 – Student intakes by post-secondary institutions

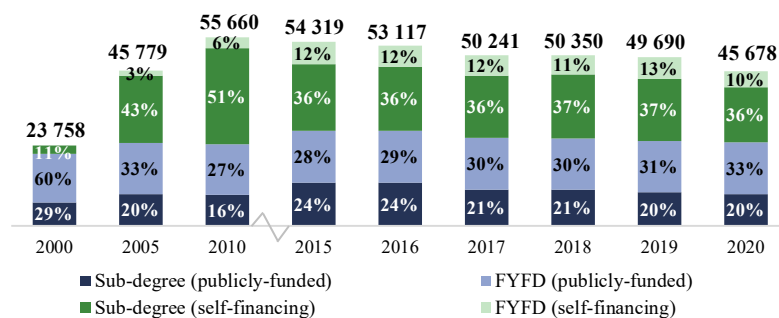
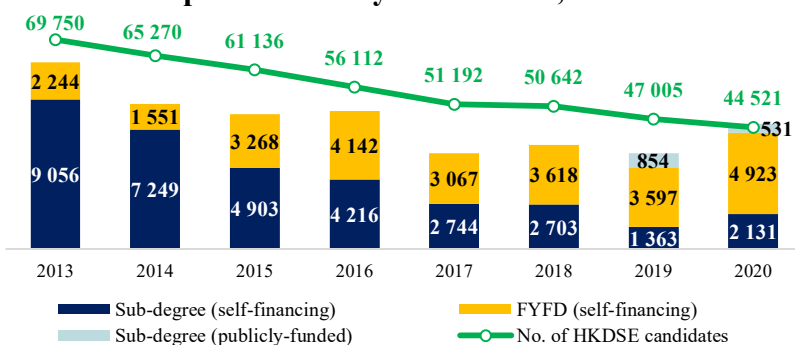


Figure 2 – Excess supply<sup>(a)</sup> of sub-degree and FYFD places in post-secondary education<sup>(b)</sup>, 2013 to 2020<sup>(c)</sup>



Notes: (a) This refers to the difference between planned and actual student intakes.  
(b) The supply of publicly-funded FYFD places are generally filled during the period.  
(c) The specified years refer to the same cohort of students who undertook HKDSE examinations and applied for post-secondary programmes. For instance, the year 2013 refers to students who sat for HKDSE examinations in that year, and applied for post-secondary studies for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Figure 3 – Self-financing institution student intake<sup>(a)</sup>, 2020

Institution	Estimated intake	Actual intake	Difference
Caritas Bianchi College of Careers	156	346	+121.8%
University of Hong Kong (SPACE)	3 036	3 295	+8.5%
Caritas Institute of Higher Education	639	692	+8.3%
Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKCC/SPEED)	4 540	4 763	+4.9%
Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUSCS)	732	751	+2.6%
Chu Hai College	602	39	-93.5%
Gratia Christian College	250	39	-84.4%
City University of Hong Kong (SCOPE)	250	81	-67.6%
Vocational Training Council	1 304	539	-58.7%
Hong Kong Metropolitan University (LiPACE)	3 613	2 462	-31.9%
Tung Wah College	1 085	741	-31.7%
UOW College of Hong Kong	1 750	1 238	-29.3%
HKU SPACE Po Leung Kuk Stanley Ho Community College	1 560	1 136	-27.2%
Hong Kong Shue Yan University	870	648	-25.5%
Lingnan University (LIFE)	573	443	-22.7%
Hang Seng University	1 000	915	-8.5%
Hong Kong Baptist University (CIE/SCE/Academy of Film)	2 145	2 004	-6.6%
Others <sup>(b)</sup>	800	507	-36.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 905</b>	<b>20 639</b>	<b>-17.1%</b>

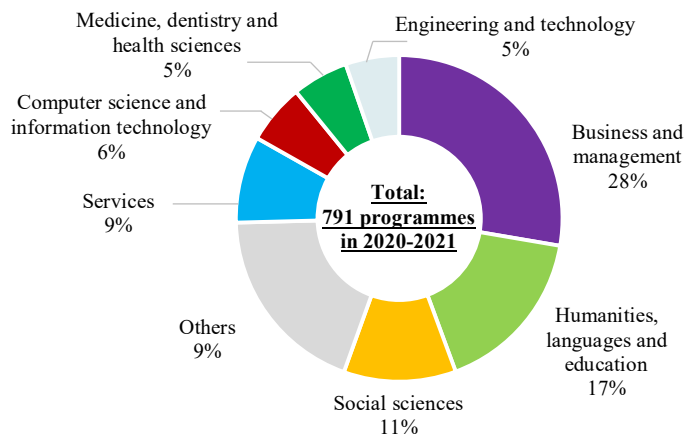
Notes: (a) Figures include the self-financing sub-degree and FYFD intakes by the respective institutions, as well as those for the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors.  
(b) Figures include all institutions with estimated intake places below 200, excluding the Hong Kong College of Technology and HKCT Institute of Higher Education due to the lack of student intake figures.

## Highlights

- In the 2000 Policy Address, the Government pledged to double the participation rate in post-secondary education to 60% within 10 years. The target was achieved in 2005, thanks to the Government's support of the parallel development of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors to broaden the study opportunities for secondary school graduates.
- There has been a rapid expansion of the self-financing post-secondary sector between 2000 and early-2010s. In 2020, there were 29 self-financing institutions supplying 46% of all sub-degree and first-year-first-degree ("FYFD") student intake places in Hong Kong (Figure 1).
- Amid the rapid expansion of the self-financing post-secondary sector, the low birth rate and the resulting decline in the number of secondary school graduates have resulted in excess supply of some sub-degree and FYFD programmes. Between 2013 and 2017, the level of saturation eased as self-financing institutions adjusted their supply of programmes in accordance with changing student demographics (Figure 2), as evidenced by the reduction in the number of planned sub-degree places by 30% during the period. Yet, the number of unmet student intakes rebounded in 2020 to over 7 000 places. This was partly due to the surge in the number of Secondary 6 graduates who chose to pursue further studies outside Hong Kong, rising from 4 249 in 2019 to 6 009 in 2020.
- The reduced demand for post-secondary education poses a challenge for self-financing post-secondary institutions whose long-term viability largely depends on tuition fee income. Quite a number of institutions have already faced difficulties in meeting their student intake targets. In 2020-2021, self-financing institutions took in 17% fewer students than planned (Figure 3).

## Self-financing post-secondary education (cont'd)

**Figure 4 – Number of self-financing programmes by area of study**

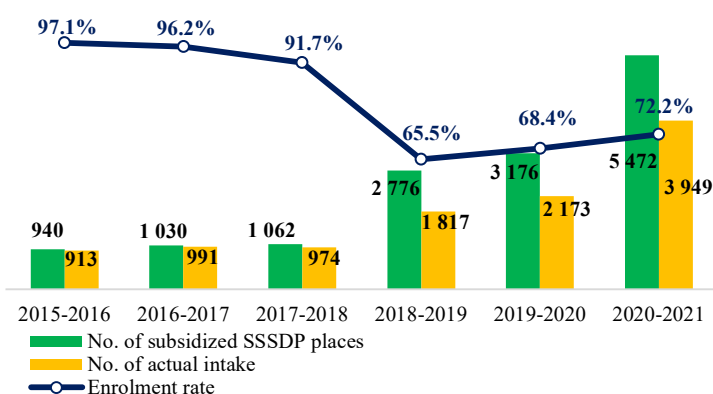


**Figure 5 – Employment situation of the first cohort of SSSDP students surveyed in 2018-2019**

Subject areas	No. of graduates <sup>(a)</sup>	No. of graduates with full-time jobs	Employment rate	Average monthly salary
Architecture and engineering	252	206	81.7%	HK\$17,533
Logistics	105	94	89.5%	HK\$16,433
Creative industries	165	108	65.5%	HK\$13,432
Health care	N/A <sup>(b)</sup>			
Testing and certification	63	50	79.4%	HK\$14,508
Tourism and hospitality	27	25	92.6%	HK\$14,825
<b>Overall</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>78.9%</b>	<b>N/A</b>

Notes: (a) The figures only refer to the number of graduates who responded to the surveys conducted by the respective self-financing institutions. There were 136 graduates who did not respond.  
(b) The graduate survey conducted in 2018-2019 did not cover the first SSSDP cohort in health care, who has a normal study duration of five years and only graduated in the 2019-2020 academic year.

**Figure 6 – Student enrolment under SSSDP<sup>(a)</sup>**



Note: (a) The quota for sub-degree programmes under SSSDP has been set at 2 000 places starting from the 2019-2020 academic year.

## Highlights

- There are also concerns over the overlapping and excessive market competition among different self-financing institutions as well as with their publicly-funded counterparts, as some self-financing institutions tend to operate programmes with lower start-up costs such as those in business, humanities and social sciences. These subjects accounted for 56% of all self-financing programmes in 2020-2021 (Figure 4).
- Over the years, the Government has provided grants/loans for self-financing institutions to be more strategic in their academic positioning and programme planning with their niche areas of specialization. As for student support, the Government launched the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (“SSSDP”) in 2015-2016 to subsidize students to pursue self-financing **undergraduate programmes** in specific industries with keen manpower demand, such as logistics, health care, and tourism and hospitality. According to the latest graduate survey which had a response rate of 82%, the first cohort of SSSDP students had graduated in 2018-2019 and achieved a favourable employment rate of nearly 80% (Figure 5).
- The Government increased the number of SSSDP places from 1 000 to 3 000 in 2018-2019, as well as expanded the coverage to include students enrolled in selected **sub-degree programmes** in 2019-2020. Although the number of students pursuing programmes under the new SSSDP increased significantly between 2018-2019 and 2020-2021, the actual enrolment has yet to catch up with the jump in number of subsidized places provided (Figure 6). According to the Government, the lower-than-expected student enrolment was due mostly to competition from other post-secondary programmes. This may indicate further need for the Government to review the early experience on the recent expansion in SSSDP with key stakeholders (including institutions, students and industries) to ensure the scheme can respond more effectively to Hong Kong’s evolving manpower needs.

Data sources: Latest figures from Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education, Education Bureau, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, and University Grants Committee.

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