

Information Note on the Outsourcing of Adult Education Courses

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the progress on the outsourcing of adult education courses formerly operated by the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB).

Background

2. On 28 April 2003, Members noted that starting from the 2003/04 school year, the three evening adult education courses^{Note} would be outsourced with the following arrangements-

- (a) Course operators should be non-profit-making organizations that have rich experience in providing local adult education services together with a good track record.
- (b) Course operators would be required to offer the courses to learners who have already enrolled in the courses in the 2002/03 school year at the same fee levels until their completion of the key stage of study within the two-year period.
- (c) Course operators would be required to operate diversified self-financed programmes that dovetail the evolving and diversified needs of adult learners and provide fee remission schemes.

Present Situation

3. Through a tendering exercise, we have commissioned two operators to run the three evening adult education courses, one covering Hong Kong and Kowloon, and the other the New Territories, for two years from September 2003. The course operators will run both subvented and self-financed classes.

^{Note:} The three courses were: the Adult Education Course (General Background) [i.e. AEC(G)] at primary level, the Government Evening Secondary School Course [i.e. GESSC] at secondary level and the English Course [i.e. EC] at both primary and secondary levels.

Subvented classes

4. In September 2003, 6 073 adult learners have enrolled in the 248 subvented classes, representing an average enrolment rate of 67%. The enrolment rate has been declining over the past few years, falling from 86% in 2001/02 which is a reflection of the availability of more alternative learning opportunities.

Self-financed Courses

5. As at September 2003, six types of self-financed courses are being operated, including Secondary 1, Secondary 5, Secondary 6 and three English courses. About 690 learners have enrolled, representing an average enrolment rate of 71%. The fees charged range from \$1,790 to \$9,800 per learner per annum. The two operators have set up fee remission schemes to help adult learners who are in need of financial assistance. Both operators have already invited applications for fee remission and they will make reference to the schemes administered by the Student Financial Assistance Agency in processing the applications.

Staffing

6. To maintain continuity, the two course operators have invited the serving staff (teaching and non-teaching) to continue their services. About 90% of the centre heads and teachers now employed had been serving in the schools before. The other newly appointed teachers are qualified and trained teachers who possess a degree plus a Postgraduate Certificate in Education or equivalent.

Follow-up actions

7. To ensure the provision of quality services by the two operators, we will monitor the internal quality assurance measures that they have set up. Such measures include class inspections, staff performance reviews, and opinion surveys among learners and teachers.

8. Both operators are also required to prepare and submit annual evaluation reports to EMB by the end of each school year. For accounting and auditing purposes, they are required to keep separate ledger accounts to reflect all the chargeable income and expenditure. These accounts should be properly kept at the centres for inspection by EMB from time to time. Furthermore, they are required to submit the annual audited accounts for examination.

9. We will encourage the two operators to offer more diversified courses. We will also continue to collaborate with the sector to optimize the use of educational resources to provide and promote more life-long learning opportunities to meet the diversified needs of adult learners.

Education and Manpower Bureau
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