

**Response to motion passed by Panel on Education on 8 May 2008
on student hostel policy**

In view of the educational value of hostel life, the then Executive Council approved in 1996 a set of criteria for calculating the level of publicly-funded student hostel provision at the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions. Pursuant to these criteria, all undergraduate students should be given the opportunity to stay in student hostels for at least one year of their studies. Furthermore, all non-local students taking UGC-funded programmes, all research postgraduate students, as well as undergraduate students whose daily travelling time exceeds four hours, should be provided with student hostel places. Taking into consideration the scarce availability of public resources, the existing hostel policy primarily looks after the accommodation needs of undergraduate students, except for research postgraduate students who need to reside near campus for carrying out research projects at the institutions.

2. The Education Panel passed a motion on 8 May 2008 urging the Administration to revise the existing hostel policy to ensure that local students pursuing publicly-funded programmes in the UGC-funded institutions are given the opportunity to stay in student hostels for at least one year, while hostel places should be guaranteed for non-local students only in the first two years. If we are to revise the existing hostel policy according to the motion, the hostel provision of the UGC-funded sector as a whole will increase by about 1 350 places in the 2007/08 academic year. However, the UGC-funded institutions are currently already facing a shortage of hostel places and the demand for hostel places will continue to increase in the coming years with the implementation of the 4-year undergraduate programme and the increased quota for non-local students. In the circumstances, we consider it more appropriate to address the hostel shortfall problem under the existing hostel policy first, before considering whether the hostel policy should be revised.

3. Admission of non-local students to our tertiary institutions can bring educational, cultural and social benefits to Hong Kong. In the long run, it will facilitate the development of Hong Kong as a regional education hub. Having regard to the benefits that non-local students can bring to Hong Kong and the high cost of accommodation in Hong Kong, we do not consider it appropriate to shorten the duration of hostel stay of non-local students at the policy level at this stage. That said, institutions are free to allocate student hostel places to individual students according to their own circumstances.

4. The Administration will continue to keep in view the demand and supply situation of student hostel places at the UGC-funded institutions, and actively explore with the UGC and relevant bureaux/departments various ways (including the provision of joint hostels) to address the hostel shortfall issue.

Education Bureau
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