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Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Room 602, Citibank Tower,
3 Garden Road,
Central,
Hong Kong

Dear Hon HO,

**LegCo Meeting on 10 November 2008 –
Responses of the Education Bureau to
the follow-up question by Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong**

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Education held on 10 November 2008, the progress of promotion of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education qualification under the new senior secondary academic structure was discussed. In response to the follow-up question raised by Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong regarding the recognition of qualifications of the pilot Applied Learning (ApL) courses, as well as how students can submit their results of pilot ApL courses to Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS), I would like to provide you with supplementary information at the Annex for your reference.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr Catherine K K CHAN)
for Secretary for Education

c.c. Legislative Council Secretariat (Attn: Miss Odelia LEUNG)

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Annex

Legislative Council Panel on Education
Supplementary Information on Applied Learning (ApL)

Piloting of ApL courses in existing Secondary 4 and 5 levels

The ApL courses (formerly known as Career-oriented Curriculum) for Secondary 4 and 5 in the current academic structure were first introduced in 2003 as a pilot of alternative curricula to suit different aptitudes of students. It is intended to pitch at the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) level and to pave the way for migrating to the new senior secondary (NSS) education. To ensure the healthy development of the pilot ApL, a progressive approach in developing, revising and improving the curriculum design according to the feedback from various stakeholders has to be adopted. Besides, a quality assurance (QA) mechanism of the curriculum should cover delivery, assessment and moderation. As such, the Education Bureau (EDB) has been working in collaboration with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) to strengthen the QA mechanism so that the recognition of pilot ApL qualifications by different stakeholders could be pursued.

2. Steady progress in getting recognition by stakeholders has been achieved in various aspects. We have announced vide EDB Circular Memorandum No. 30/2008 issued on 25 February 2008 that successful completion of one quality-assured ApL course is recognised by the EDB, the course providers, the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions (FCE), the HKEAA and the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) for purposes of further studies and employment as comparable to:

- one HKCEE subject pass, up to a maximum of two subjects, for admission to further studies in the respective institutions of the course providers;
- one HKCEE subject pass, each counted as one point and up to a maximum of two points, for admission to Secondary 6 and for entry to the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE);
- one HKCEE subject pass, excluding Chinese Language and English Language, each counted as one point and up to a maximum of two subjects, for entry to Pre-Associate Degree Programmes;

- successful completion of two electives under Project Yi Jin (PYJ) if the students who enrol in PYJ have successfully completed one or two quality-assured ApL course(s) in a related study area. In other words, students will be required to study seven core modules plus one elective (instead of three electives) under PYJ; and
- a pass in HKCEE (excluding Chinese Language and English Language) for the purpose of appointment to civil service, subject to the counting of a maximum of two courses.

3. EDB is fully aware that one of the important factors in ApL development is the articulation for further studies and for work, which has been emphasized throughout the development process. As ApL is a new concept to the Hong Kong context, it takes time to evaluate the design, implementation, student performance with adequate information, and to explain progressively the details to different stakeholders. EDB has been communicating with tertiary institutions regularly on the development of ApL. The recognition of pilot ApL as relevant qualification for admission to post-secondary programmes and university programmes other than Pre-Associate Degree Programmes is still at the discretion of relevant institutions in the current academic system.

The Recognition of Applied Learning under NSS

4. While the 24 NSS subjects were being recognized progressively by universities during the consultation processes on the New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education during 2004-2006, ApL was being piloted at HKCEE level and its position in NSS being consulted in 2006. The experiences of pilot have been used to inform the design of ApL for NSS level. Since 2006, we have started the discussion on ApL qualification through regular liaison meetings with tertiary institutions and reached out to frontline admission personnel. Tertiary institutions have kept an open mind on the development of ApL. The curriculum framework for the six areas of studies in ApL for NSS is already finalized and announced in 2008. A full set of course contents, QA mechanism, assessment and moderation method, and level descriptors of students' performance with concrete samples of students' work, based on pilot experiences, would be available in 2009 for further consideration in the recognition process. The set of materials would help to accelerate our discussion with different stakeholders, including tertiary institutions, employers and professional bodies on the recognition of ApL.

Application of courses through the JUPAS

5. The Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) serves as the main route of application to assist students with HKALE results (past and / or current) to apply for admission to degree/higher diploma/associate degree programmes funded by the University Grants Committee, as well as non-government-funded bachelor's degree programmes offered by the Open University of Hong Kong. Its role is to collect information about students' application for the consideration of individual institutions. For JUPAS 2009, students are only required to provide their personal particulars, programme choices and other additional qualifications and information (if any) by the application deadline (i.e. 2 December 2008). There is no need for students to submit their HKCEE and HKALE results since these data will be sent by HKEAA to JUPAS directly at a later stage after the deadline of the application. In fact, students may change their programme choices and/or provide extra qualifications later after the deadline. It is at the discretion of individual institutions to consider the qualifications submitted.

6. Students who are interested in the non-JUPAS courses offered by post-secondary institutions such as Vocational Training Council and City University of Hong Kong (School of Continuing and Professional Education) can submit their application together with available ApL results to the respective institutions for consideration.

7. EDB has liaised with the JUPAS Office regarding the concerns about the qualification of pilot ApL and submission of pilot ApL results to JUPAS. JUPAS Board of Management has informed that they have made efforts to advance their next meeting to 27 November this year to discuss the matter of ApL from a wider and more comprehensive perspective. If the Board agrees to the submission of ApL result(s) to the institutions through JUPAS, HKEAA will send the result(s) to JUPAS direct. Otherwise, EDB will attempt to approach individual interested institutions and discuss the possibility for HKEAA to send students' pilot ApL results direct to them.

8. With regard to the student mentioned by Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Education held on 10

November 2008, EDB has contacted her to understand the situation and explore how EDB can help. The student was informed that EDB was discussing the matter with JUPAS, and she was advised to proceed with her application through JUPAS without worrying about how and where to input her ApL results. EDB will keep in view of the development and offer her help in facilitating the reflection of ApL results when necessary.

Education Bureau
November 2008