

For Discussion
on 9 January 2012

Legislative Council Panel on Education

A new Project Yi Jin Under the New Academic Structure

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the Administration's plan for the development of the Yi Jin Diploma under the New Academic Structure and seeks Members' views before finalising the details for implementation in the 2012/13 academic year.

Project Yi Jin

2. Launched in 2000, the existing Project Yi Jin (PYJ) has provided an alternative pathway and expanded the continuing education opportunities for Secondary 5 school leavers and adult learners. Specifically, PYJ has the following objectives:

- (a) to provide an alternative pathway for those who have completed secondary education with unsatisfactory examination results to obtain a formal qualification for further study and ;
- (b) to be a worthwhile option for young people and adult learners to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for both work and further studies; and
- (c) to exert a positive influence on the students' personal growth, people skills and career planning.

3. Subjects included in the PYJ are multidisciplinary with an aim to cater for participants with different aptitudes. The programme aims at upgrading students' knowledge through combining practical training and academic pursuits, with emphasis on biliteracy, trilingualism and information technology

application. The programme comprises 10 modules with a total of 600 contact hours, including 420 contact hours for core modules and 180 contact hours for electives. The seven core modules include Chinese Language, English Language I, English Language II, Mathematics, Information Technology, Putonghua and Communication Skills. A wide range of subjects, which are primarily practical subjects such as computer art design and bookkeeping, are offered as electives to cater for participants with different interests and aptitude.

4. Upon completion of studies, a PYJ student is awarded a full PYJ certificate after he/she has passed all ten modules of the programme. The certificate has been assessed by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications as comparable to five passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination ("HKCEE") for continuing education and employment purposes. The PYJ certificate is also accepted by the Government as meeting the entry requirements of more than 30 civil service grades which require five passes (including English Language and Chinese Language) in the HKCEE.

5. The programme is run by members of the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions (FCE)¹ on a self-financing basis. The programme has gained increasing popularity and recognition over the years. The enrolment for the programme has progressively increased from around 2 000 - 3 000 in the first few years of launch to 15 000 and 16 000 in 2009 and 2010. Up till now, the programme has benefited over 88 000 students. Furthermore, according to the findings of the annual graduate survey conducted by the FCE, around 50% of the graduates were engaged in work and almost 40% were furthering their studies through associate degree, certificate or pre-AD programmes in the past three years. Among those who were employed, some 300 - 500 PYJ graduates (relying on the PYJ Full Certificate as the highest educational attainment) were recruited by government departments each year in the recent five years. PYJ has proven a viable choice for school leavers with unsatisfactory result in HKCEE and adult learners to gain the necessary qualification for continuing education and employment. With the last cohort of students taking the HKCEE in the 2010/11 academic year, the PYJ will operate till the 2011/12 academic year.

¹ The FCE was established in 1994 to promote lifelong learning in Hong Kong. Its current membership consists of the continuing and professional education (CPE) units of the eight University Grants Committee-funded institutions and other major providers of CPE programmes in Hong Kong.

New PYJ type programme under the New Academic Structure

6. The first student cohort under the NSS academic structure will complete their secondary education and participate in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) in 2012. In the light of the success of PYJ, we are working with the FCE to review the merits of PYJ and explore the feasibility of providing a new programme based on the PYJ model under the new academic structure. We have completed the first stage of the review and are conducting the final stage of the review.

7. In the first stage of the review, we reaffirm the benefits of the PYJ under the old academic structure and consider that there are merits for introducing a new programme based on the PYJ model at the initial stage of implementing the New Academic Structure. We appreciate that, as in the old academic structure, some students taking the HKDSE might not be able to attain qualifications that enable them to meet the entry requirements for continuing education and employment. Furthermore, there will also be adult learners who wish to acquire the basic formal qualification for further studies or employment. Under these circumstances, a new programme based on the PYJ model would continue to provide an alternative path for these students.

8. We are conducting the second stage of the review in consultation with the FCE. During this stage, the focus is on developing a new programme, taking into account the need to align its format and content with the key objectives of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum. The NSS academic structure is designed to create more flexible and broad-based learning opportunities to cater for students' different aptitude, abilities and needs. Building on the mission of the PYJ mentioned in paragraph 2, the key focus of the new programme would include:

- (a) to provide an alternative pathway for secondary school leavers under the New Academic structure as well as adult learners to obtain a formal qualification for the purposes of employment and further study;
- (b) to equip students with an array of generic skills and general knowledge including basic language skills, information technology skills, mathematical reasoning skills and interpersonal skills, thereby enabling students to build a firm foundation of knowledge and skills

for employment and further study; and

- (c) to strengthen students' motivation to study and to allow students to develop self-learning skills and pursue further studies independently.

9. It is intended that upon satisfactory completion of studies, a student under the new programme will be awarded a full Yi Jin Diploma after he/she has passed all eight modules of the programme. We are currently seeking the assistance of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications on a comparability study. The intention is that the Yi Jin Diploma will be deemed comparable to the attainment of Level 2 standard in five subjects in the HKDSE including Chinese and English, for employment or continuing education purposes. It is noteworthy that this qualification will be regarded as meeting the entry requirements for admission to Higher Diploma or Associate Degree programmes. We are also examining the possibility of including an additional subject of Mathematics elective course under the programme. For those students who have satisfactorily completed the said additional Mathematics elective course, the qualification is intended to be deemed comparable to the attainment of Level 2 standard in five subjects in the HKDSE including Chinese, English and Mathematics.

Way Forward

10. Subject to the completion of the feasibility study in the coming months, we plan to launch the new PYJ in the 2012/13 academic year, so as to provide multiple pathways for the first student cohort under the new academic structure who would complete their senior secondary education and participate in HKDSE in 2012.

11. Members are invited to note and comment on the content of this paper.

Education Bureau
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