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Legislative Council

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Panel on Education

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 11 June 2012

Applied Learning in new senior secondary curriculum

Purpose

This paper provides background information on Applied Learning ("ApL") in the new senior secondary ("NSS") curriculum and summarizes the deliberations of the Panel on Education ("the Panel") on issues relating to ApL.

Background

2.　　Under the NSS curriculum, Secondary ("S") 5 and S6 students may choose ApL courses as elective subjects. ApL complements senior secondary subjects by offering studies with stronger elements of practical learning linked to broad professional and vocational fields. There are six areas of studies in ApL, namely Creative Studies; Media and Communication; Business, Management and Law; Services; Applied Science; and Engineering and Production.

3.　　According to the Administration, schools are encouraged to adopt different modes of implementation by allowing students to enrol in a wide spectrum of ApL courses according to their own interests and learning needs at the venue of course providers, and/or working collaboratively with course providers to offer selected courses to students at school.

4.　　The first cohort of NSS ApL courses was launched in September 2010 with 30 courses under six areas of studies being offered by 11 course providers. As at the end of September 2010, there were about 7 000 student enrolments from about 300 schools, as compared with about 6 000 student enrolments from

about 200 schools in the 2008-2010 cohort of piloting. In the second cohort launched in September 2011, five additional new courses were developed and a total of 35 ApL courses were offered by 12 course providers to NSS students. The number of schools offering ApL courses in the 16 course clusters and the respective number of student applications in the first (i.e. 2010-2012) and second (i.e. 2011-2013) cohorts are in **Appendix I**.

Deliberations of the Panel

5.   The Panel discussed issues relating to ApL in the context of the progress of implementation of the new academic structure and promotion of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") qualification. The major concerns raised by members are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Pilot ApL

6.   Members noted that ApL Courses (formerly known as Career-oriented Curriculum) for S4 and S5 in the old academic structure were first introduced in 2003 as a pilot of alternative curricula to suit different aptitudes of students. It was intended to pitch at the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination ("HKCEE") level and to pave the way for migrating to NSS education. Students could select ApL courses by joining the programmes at the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education ("IVE") or Caritas. Alternatively, schools could invite tutors from IVE or Caritas to run the programmes at school. The Administration also advised that it had been working in collaboration with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority ("HKEAA") to develop the quality assurance mechanism and assessment framework so that the recognition of pilot ApL qualifications by different stakeholders could be pursued.

7.   Members stressed the importance of the breadth and depth of ApL courses in enhancing students' ability to find employment or pursue continuing education. Members considered it necessary to attract the professionals in the relevant trades to contribute and participate in the delivery of ApL courses. They suggested that the Administration should make reference to the experience gained from the operation of Project Yi Jin ("PYJ").

8.   The Administration responded that a number of teachers had indicated interest to be engaged in teaching ApL courses alongside and in collaboration with other professionals delivering the courses. The Administration had made reference to the experiences gained from PYJ and involved the professionals in the relevant trades who had indicated an intention to contribute or participate in

the development and delivery of ApL courses. Professional development programmes for teachers who wished to be engaged in ApL courses were in progress.

Recognition of ApL courses

9.   At the Panel meeting on 10 November 2008, members expressed concern about the recognition of pilot ApL courses for admission under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System ("JUPAS").   It was reported that a student who had completed a pilot ApL course on tourism had been informed of the non-recognition of the course under JUPAS.

10.   The Administration advised that under the old academic structure, one ApL subject pass was treated as a subject pass in the HKCEE (excluding Chinese Language and English Language) for admission to Pre-Associate Degree/3-year Higher Diploma programmes or equivalent by the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions.   The same treatment applied for civil service appointments, subject to the counting of a maximum of two courses.   In addition, if students who enrolled in PYJ had successfully completed one or two quality-assured ApL course(s) in a related study area, it would be equivalent to the successful completion of two electives under PYJ. In other words, students would be required to study seven core modules plus one elective (instead of three electives) under PYJ.

11.   The Administration further advised that as ApL was a new concept in Hong Kong, it took time to evaluate the design, implementation, student performance and to explain progressively the details to different stakeholders. The Education Bureau ("EDB") had been communicating with tertiary institutions regularly on the development of ApL.

12.   At the meeting in June 2011, the Administration reported to the Panel on the latest progress of the recognition of ApL courses under the new academic structure as follows:

(a)   students' results would be recorded in the HKDSE certificate as "Attained" and "Attained with Distinction", which were accepted as attaining the competencies required at HKDSE Level 2 and Level 3 or above respectively for the purposes of further studies and/or work;

(b)   for further studies in sub-degree programmes, a maximum of two ApL subjects would be counted for consideration of admission;

(c) for undergraduate programmes, University Grants Committee-funded institutions had made announcements in September 2010 on using ApL subjects as specified/unspecified elective subjects, for award of extra bonus or additional information, to suit the needs of different programmes and faculties of different institutions; and

(d) the Civil Service Bureau would take into account the two levels of attainment in the ApL courses when considering the acceptance of results in HKDSE for civil service appointment.

Students submitting results of pilot ApL courses to JUPAS

13. Regarding members' concern about how students submitted their results of pilot ApL courses to JUPAS for application for university admission under the old academic structure, the Administration informed the Panel in November 2008 that it had liaised with the JUPAS Office, which had advised that if the JUPAS Board of Management agreed to the submission of pilot ApL results to the institutions through JUPAS, HKEAA would send the results to JUPAS direct. Otherwise, EDB would attempt to approach individual interested institutions and discuss the possibility for HKEAA to send students' pilot ApL results direct to them.

Latest developments

14. The Administration will report to the Panel the progress in implementing ApL in NSS at the meeting on 11 June 2012.

Relevant papers

15. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix II**.

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**Number of schools offering Applied Learning courses in the 16 course clusters
and the respective number of student applications
in the 2010-2012 and 2011-2013 cohorts**

Area of Studies	Course Cluster	No. of Schools Offering ApL Courses		No. of Student Applications	
		2010-12 Cohort	2011-13 Cohort	2010-12 Cohort	2011-13 Cohort
Creative Studies	1. Design Studies	178	156	1 615	1 122
	2. Media Arts	108	104	473	402
	3. Performing Arts	81	81	435	433
Media and Communication	4. Films, TV and Broadcasting Studies	71	60	550	432
	5. Media Production and Public Relations	94	103	340	352
Business, Management and Law	6. Business Studies	102	99	704	577
	7. Clientele Management	62	46	351	219
	8. Legal Studies	54	33	219	98
Services	9. Hospitality Services	223	222	2 503	3 170
	10. Event Management	52	40	1 766	121
	11. Personal and Community Services	164	162	1 276	932
Applied Science	12. Medical Science and Health Care	129	143	688	771
	13. Psychology	Not applicable	86	Not applicable	590
	14. Sports	81	72	326	236
Engineering and Production	15. Civil and Mechanical Engineering	34	46	133	169
	16. Services Engineering	105	121	508	515
Total				11 887	10 139

* Figures as at first year course commencement of the respective cohort

Source: Education Bureau, Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2012-2013

Relevant papers on
Applied Learning in new senior secondary curriculum

Committee	Date of meeting/ issue date	Paper
Legislative Council	15.10.2003	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 10 - 18 (Question)
Panel on Education	29.10.2004 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes CB(2)1721/04-05(01)
Panel on Education	20.12.2004 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	3.1.2005 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	5.1.2005	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 68 - 71 (Question)
Panel on Education	3.6.2005 (Items I - III)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	20.10.2005 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	13.2.2006 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	10.5.2006	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 86 - 91 (Question)
Panel on Education	12.6.2006 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting/ issue date	Paper
Panel on Education	10.7.2006 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes CB(2)2680/05-06(01) CB(2)2680/05-06(02) CB(2)2680/05-06(03) CB(2)2792/05-06(01)
Panel on Education	25.5.2007 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	9.7.2007	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	12.11.2007 (Item VII)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	21.5.2008	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 77 - 78 (Question)
Panel on Education	12.6.2008 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	10.11.2008 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes CB(2)353/08-09(01)
Legislative Council	11.2.2009	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 86 - 91 (Question)
Panel on Education	30.3.2009 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	11.7.2009 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	21.10.2009	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 98 - 101 (Question)

Committee	Date of meeting/ issue date	Paper
Legislative Council	6.1.2010	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 118 - 127 (Question)
Panel on Education	30.4.2010 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	12.7.2010 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	13.6.2011 (Item VII)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	20.4.2012 (Item V)	Agenda

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