For discussion
on 10 November 2014

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Legislative Council Panel on Education

Enhancing the Transparency and Quality
of the Self-financing Post-secondary Sector

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Purpose

This paper updates Members on the latest development of the initiatives and measures to enhance the transparency and quality of the self-financing post-secondary education sector.

Overview

2.   It is the Government's policy to support the parallel development of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors. In terms of opportunities for further study, the Government is committed to providing our young people with quality and diversified study pathways[1]. The availability of programmes at different levels and in a broad range of disciplines helps realise the policy objectives of lifelong learning and nurturing of diverse talents. Through the development of the publicly-funded and self-financing sectors, over 38% of our young people in the relevant cohort have access to degree-level education in the 2013/14 academic year. Including sub-degree education, nearly 70% of them now have access to post-secondary education.

3.   The self-financing sector helps diversify our post-secondary education sector and is conducive to Hong Kong's further development as a regional education hub. By responding quickly to changing society needs, the self-financing sector plays a pivotal role in upgrading the quality of the human resources in Hong Kong by offering a wide array of programmes for school leavers, our workforce and the community at large.

4.   It is noteworthy at the outset that post-secondary education institutions in Hong Kong, whether publicly-funded or self-financing, enjoy a

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[1] At present, there are 19 local degree-awarding higher education institutions in Hong Kong, ten of which are self-financed. The other nine are publicly-funded through the University Grants Committee (UGC) and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Besides, there are over 20 post-secondary institutions providing full-time locally-accredited sub-degree programmes.

high degree of autonomy and academic freedom. Notwithstanding this, the community naturally expects that post-secondary education institutions are able to provide a quality nurture to our younger generation. Therefore, Government's policy oversight of the institutions focusses on enhancing transparency, quality assurance (QA), good governance and the interest of students. Where public funds are involved, we also devise mechanism to ensure that resources are put to intended use and in a prudent manner while seeking to refrain from micro-management. In devising oversight and regulatory mechanisms, we are guided by the principles of reasonableness and proportionality.

Enhancing Transparency

5.   With the rapid development of the self-financing post-secondary sector since 2000, there is a growing demand by the students and other stakeholders for better access to information. While the Government is mindful not to interfere with the internal affairs of institutions, we strive to enhance the transparency of the self-financing sector. In this connection, the Government and the sector have implemented a number of initiatives and arrangements –

   (a)   ***Comprehensive information on institutions and the sector*** – Launched in December 2013 by the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education (CSPE) [2] , the website *Concourse* (*www.cspe.edu.hk*) provides comprehensive information and statistics of the sector, which helps enhance transparency and accountability. The information provided includes related Government policy, the regulatory framework, Government support measures, QA matters, graduates' progression pathways and information on the self-financing post-secondary education institutions, such as campus facilities, application and admission arrangements, support services, scholarships and awards as well as activities. In addition, institutions have provided indicative admission scores of intakes and overviews of organisational governance, which serve as a reference for students in making articulation decisions and help enhance the transparency of the sector;

   (b)   ***Comprehensive information on programmes and estimated intake places*** - Launched in 2007, the Information Portal for Accredited

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[2] Established in April 2012 in response to the recommendation of UGC's Report on Higher Education Review 2010, CSPE serves as a useful platform for discussing macro and strategic issues of common interest to the self-financing post-secondary sector, as well as promoting quality and good practices.

Post-secondary Programmes (iPASS) (*www.ipass.gov.hk*) provides comprehensive information on all full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree and undergraduate programmes. Since December 2012, iPASS has also publicised the estimated intake places of institutions offering self-financing sub-degree and undergraduate programmes to enhance transparency;

(c)   ***Common electronic application platform*** – The Electronic Advance Application System for Post-secondary Education Programmes (E-APP) (*www.eapp.gov.hk*) is a one-stop internet-based online application system to facilitate the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination candidates to lodge advance applications for locally-accredited post-secondary programmes not covered under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS).   Since its launch in 2012, E-APP has become a widely accepted platform for HKDSE candidates to apply for full-time locally-accredited sub-degree and undergraduate programmes and for planning of further studies;

(d)   ***Admission and refund arrangements*** - To enhance support for students and to enable institutions to process application and admission in an orderly and efficient manner, institutions have adopted common application and admission arrangements for locally-accredited post-secondary programmes not covered by JUPAS since 2012, including common deadline for payment of enrolment deposits; designated webpages showing the list of programmes that are still open for application; benchmarking enrolment deposits at not more than $5,000; and common deadline regarding application for refund of enrolment deposit; and

(e)   ***Collective guidelines for the sector*** - Member institutions of the Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education promulgated in April 2013 a set of guidelines for their locally-accredited self-financing programmes at undergraduate level and below to enhance consistency and transparency in enrolment and admission arrangements.   The guidelines stipulate the arrangements agreed among member institutions in relation to the recruitment ceilings for locally-accredited programmes; admission requirements; advanced standing; and pre-admission publicity activities, etc.

Enhancing Quality and Governance

6.   To promote the healthy and sustainable development of the self-

financing post-secondary sector, the Government has implemented a basket of measures to enhance the quality of the sector as set out below –

(a) **Land Grant Scheme** – The Scheme provides land at nominal premium or vacant premises at nominal rent to self-financing non-profit-making post-secondary institutions.   Since the launch of the Scheme in 2002, 11 sites and six vacant premises have been granted for the development of self-financing full-time locally-accredited post-secondary programmes.

(b) **Start-up Loan Scheme** – The Scheme provides interest-free loans to self-financing non-profit-making post-secondary institutions in support of the development of college premises, reprovisioning of existing premises operating in sub-optimal environment and enhancement of teaching and learning facilities.   Of the total commitment of $9 billion, 38 loans amounting to $7 billion have been approved.   Moreover, the ambit of the Start-up Loan Scheme had been extended to support the development of student hostels since 2012 for the self-financing tertiary education sector.

(c) **Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme** – The Scheme supports projects dedicated to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning of self-financing programmes.   It was launched in 2008 with a one-off injection of $100 million.   A total of 65 projects involving a total amount of around $99.4 million have been approved since the commencement of the Scheme in the 2008/09 academic year.

(d) **Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund** – The $3.52 billion Fund aims to provide scholarships to outstanding self-financing students and supports worthwhile initiatives and schemes to enhance and assure the quality of self-financing post-secondary education.   Under the Self-financing Post-secondary Scholarship Scheme of the Fund, a total of about $159 million was awarded to more than 7 400 students since its commencement in 2011.   As regards the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme set up in 2012, there were 22 projects with a total grant of more than $96 million approved so far.

(e) **Qualifications Framework Support Schemes** and **Qualifications Framework Fund** – As part of the efforts to support the development of Qualifications Framework (QF), the time-limited QF Support Schemes were launched in 2008.   The Schemes had encouraged and assisted education providers in seeking accreditation of their programmes and register the qualifications

and programmes in the Qualifications Register. All self-financing post-secondary education providers also benefited from the Schemes. To support the sustainable development and implementation of QF, an endowment fund, namely the QF Fund, was established on 1 September 2014. The QF Fund will support various schemes/initiatives for QF development, QF-related studies / projects and public education. The post-secondary education providers are also one of the beneficiaries under the QF Fund.

(f) **Sixth Matching Grant Scheme** – As a policy and funding instrument, Matching Grant Schemes help institutions secure more funds for better quality education, and while fund-raising, also enhance institutions' dialogues with other sectors of the community and over time, to help foster a philanthropic culture. For the Sixth Matching Grant Scheme, $2.5 billion was allocated and the coverage was extended to cover all statutory and approved post-secondary institutions. A total of $400 million has been granted to eight self-financing post-secondary institutions under the Sixth Matching Grant Scheme.

(g) **Research Endowment Fund** - $3 billion under the Fund has been allocated to support the self-financing degree sector in enhancing its academic and research development. The investment income will be used to operate three research funding schemes that cater for the needs of the self-financing degree sector. For the 2014/15 funding allocation exercise, a total amount of about $100 million has been granted to seven local degree-awarding self-financing institutions.

(h) **Student finance** – The Student Financial Assistance Agency provides means-tested and non-means-tested financial assistance for students in the self-financing post-secondary sectors. Since the introduction of the Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students in 2001, the Scheme was improved in 2008 so that full-time students pursuing locally-accredited, self-financing post-secondary education programmes now have access to financial assistance in the forms of means-tested grant and low-interest loans, at a comparable level to their counterparts in the publicly-funded programmes. In the 2013/14 academic year, a total of about 26 000 applicants, representing about one-third of eligible students, were given grants totaling about $1,200 million.

Quality Assurance

7.   Apart from the above, the Government attaches great importance to the QA of post-secondary programmes offered by both UGC-funded and self-financing institutions.   Currently, there are three QA bodies in Hong Kong to monitor the quality of the post-secondary education sector.   The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) is a statutory body responsible for the QA of all operators and programmes except the UGC-funded institutions which enjoy self-accrediting status[3].   The Quality Assurance Council (QAC), under the aegis of the UGC, conducts quality audits of UGC-funded institutions and programmes offered at undergraduate level and above, however funded.   The Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC) was established by the Heads of Universities Committees to provide peer review of the QA processes of self-financing sub-degree programmes offered by the UGC-funded institutions themselves.

8.   UGC recommended in its Report on Higher Education Review 2010 that a single QA body for the entire post-secondary sector should be set up. While the Government is open-minded on the idea of a single QA body, we are of the view that a credible QA mechanism should include an element of external overview.   Hence, the adequacy of the JQRC would need to be looked into. Since then, we have been implementing incremental administrative measures to enhance the QA mechanism –

(a)   The Government has replaced the Tripartite Liaison Committee (comprising the Education Bureau (EDB), HKCAAVQ and JQRC) with the Liaison Committee on Quality Assurance by engaging QAC. The goals of the Committee are to promote in a more efficient and effective manner sharing of good practices among all the QA bodies and enhance consistency and transparency so as to enhance accountability;

(b)   As stated in its response to the UGC's Report on Higher Education Review, the Government considers that periodic external audits and reviews should be conducted on community colleges or self-financing sub-degree operations under the aegis of UGC-funded institutions so as to enhance QA and ensure consistency and coherence in standards.   To this end, a working group involving UGC, UGC-funded institutions, HKCAAVQ and EDB has been established to plan for and oversee the implementation details; and

(c)   In connection with (b), EDB has stipulated under the Sixth Matching

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[3]   The Hong Kong Institute of Education has self-accrediting status in respect of its teacher education learning programmes.   Its non-teacher education learning programmes are subject to the four-stage QA process by HKCAAVQ.

Grant Scheme launched in August 2012 that UGC-funded institutions would need to undertake that their sub-degree operations benefitting from this Scheme should be subject to periodic external quality audits in future. UGC-funded institutions participating in Land Grant Scheme, Start-up Loan Scheme and Quality Enhancement Support Scheme under the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund starting from mid-2012 have also been required to make a similar undertaking.

Employability

9.   Separately, there have been community concerns about whether the provision of self-financing post-secondary education in Hong Kong has taken into account the social and economic needs, and whether graduates are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skill sets required in the workplace. On this, EDB has repeatedly reminded institutions offering self-financing sub-degree and degree programmes that they should take due account of the demographic and manpower trends in Hong Kong and individual economic sectors in planning or updating their programmes; they should also attach greater importance to enhancing the employability of the graduates, having regard to local and international good practices. Notwithstanding the broad framework of the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap 320), we have, based on the considerations in paragraph 4 above, introduced improvement measures. For instance, institutions are required to publish the graduate profile and employment pathway expected of new degree programmes to be offered starting from the 2015/16 academic year. Moreover, they have been encouraged to conduct survey(s) on employers and publish the findings of the survey(s) and other information related to the future employability of graduates of the programmes.

10.   In this connection, CSPE organised the "Seminar on Closer Alignment between Post-secondary Education Institutions and Industries" on 30 October 2013 to serve as a catalyst to promote exchanges between institutions and industries in broadening opportunities for young people, and improving their employability and nurturing talents for the social and economic development of Hong Kong. To sustain the momentum, follow-up actions such as stock-taking of the current situation through a questionnaire survey for post-secondary institutions, focus group meetings with post-secondary graduates, sharing of good practices by post-secondary institutions, conduct of industry-specific survey on opinions of employers on performance of post-secondary graduates, etc. are being/will be taken.

11.   It is also noteworthy that following the announcement in the 2014 Policy Address, we have introduced the **Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors** starting from the 2015/16 academic year to subsidise up to

1 000 students per cohort to pursue designated full-time locally-accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines to nurture talents to meet Hong Kong's social and economic needs. The Scheme will be implemented on a pilot basis for three cohorts and then subject to a review on its effectiveness.

Consultancy Study and Code of Good Practices

12. While self-financing post-secondary institutions are diverse in size, character and mission, good governance and QA are of pivotal importance to the healthy and sustainable development of the self-financing sector. In order to further promote the enhancement of governance and QA for the sector, CSPE has earlier engaged an external consultant to conduct a **Consultancy Study on "Local and International Good Practices in the Governance and Quality Assurance of the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Sector"**, with a view to developing a code of good practices for further advancing the development of the sector.

13. The Report of the Consultancy Study was published in August 2014. The full report and the executive summary have been uploaded onto the *Concourse* website for access by the public. Overall speaking, the Report covers comprehensive information and analysis on issues concerning governance and QA with reference to the experience and practices in Hong Kong and abroad; observations and recommended approach; a framework of the proposed code of good practices on governance and QA; as well as the promulgation and implementation strategy. A framework of the proposed code of practices on governance and QA is set out at **Annex**. It comprises the following key aspects –

    (a) Institutional governance and management;

    (b) Programme design and delivery; and

    (c) Staffing, physical resources and student support.

14. Based on the findings of the Report, CSPE has planned to further advance the work on promoting good governance, including –

    (a) A session will be organised in Q4 of 2014 with the self-financing post-secondary institutions with a view to sharing with them the findings and recommendations in the Report; and

    (b) In consultation with relevant stakeholders, CSPE will work on the recommendations of the Report and will compile **a code of good practices on governance and QA for the self-financing post-secondary sector**, to be adopted on a voluntary basis, tentatively in

the first half of 2015.

Way Forward

15.	Members are invited to note the latest development of the self-financing post-secondary sector and offer views.

Education Bureau
November 2014

**Framework on Proposed Code of Good Practices on
Governance and Quality Assurance for
Self-financing Post-secondary Education Sector**

Components of the Code		**Individual examples in the Consultancy Study**
1	**Institutional governance and management**	
1.1	*Mission and vision*	
	Institutions should draw up and publish mission and vision statements which will underpin the institutions' design and delivery of learning programmes and Quality Assurance (QA) and resource allocation policies.	The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) requires operators to demonstrate that their legal status, mission, aims and objectives are appropriate to the delivery of their learning programmes and have educational, QA and resource allocation policies that are related to their mission, aims and objectives and which are appropriate for their size and scope during the Initial Evaluation. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education states that higher education institutions are expected to publish information that describes their missions, values and overall strategy. In the Checklist for Good Practices drawn up by the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada, the American Council on Education (ACE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the International Association of Universities (IAU) in 2004, institutions are urged in their self-assessment process by reviewing if their missions and goals include a commitment to social, cultural and economic well-being of communities, and linguistic and cultural diversity and a commitment to the importance of critical thinking that underpins responsible citizenship at the local, national and global levels.
1.2	*Development plan and annual reports*	
1.2.1	Institutions should compile development plans which are aligned with their missions and visions and based on a detailed analysis of the institution's own strengths and weaknesses and of the opportunities and challenges presented by the environment, and annual reports containing, among others, a review of activities undertaken during the year and the performance of the institutions.	As stated in the handbook "Good practices in quality assurance" published in 2010, the Tripartite Liaison Committee observed that for self-financing post-secondary education institutions offering sub-degree programmes, most of them "develop a collectively agreed Strategic Plan, aligned with their Mission Statement, and based on a detailed analysis of the institution's own strengths and weaknesses and of the opportunities and threats presented by the environment".

	Components of the Code	Individual examples in the Consultancy Study
1.2.2	Abstracts of the development plans and annual reports which contain high level performance outcomes should be published.	The UK Quality Code for Higher Education states that higher education institutions are expected to publish information that describes their mission, values and overall strategy. In the UK, the voluntary Code of Practice adopted by the Committee of University Chairmen also specifies that the institution's annual performance against key performance indicators should be published widely, including on the Internet and in its annual report. The National Governance Protocols introduced by the Australian government, as part of the Higher Education Support Act, require that the annual reports of post-secondary education institutions not eligible for general Commonwealth-funded places must be used for reporting of high level outcomes and include a report on risk management.
1.3	*Financial reports*	
1.3.1	Institutions should publish at least a summary of a financial statement of the institution annually.	One of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/ the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines on the quality of cross-border higher education ensures transparency of the financial status of the institution. The voluntary Code of Practice adopted by the Committee of University Chairman in the UK and the annual reports of post-secondary education institutions not eligible for general Commonwealth-funded places in Australia also cover the financial statements. The Law Reform Commission in Hong Kong in its report on charities published in December 2013 recommended that, among others, "the Administration should ensure that tax-exempt charities make information about their operations available to the public by publishing certain documents, such as their financial statements and activities' reports, on their websites." The Commission observed that in overseas jurisdictions, such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, certain information about registered charities is made available to the public and believed that this is an effective way of ensuring greater accountability and transparency among charities.
1.4	*Management structure and processes*	

	Components of the Code	Individual examples in the Consultancy Study
1.4.1	The governing body of an institution should have an appropriate mix of stakeholders which may vary in accordance with the different circumstances of institutions.	The Voluntary code of best practice for the governance of Australian universities published by the University Chancellors Council specifies that "there should be a majority of external independent members who are neither enrolled as a student nor employed by the university".
		In the UK, the voluntary Code of Practice adopted by the Committee of University Chairmen requires that there should be a balance of skills and experience among members sufficient to enable the governing body to meet its primary responsibilities and to ensure stakeholder confidence.
1.4.2	The institution should formulate clear lines of responsibility, delegation of authority *and* terms of reference for its governing body and key committees like the academic board, finance committee and QA committee.	The Council of Europe's Higher Education Forum on Governance recommended that, among others, there should be transparency in procedures and tasks and effective mechanisms of accountability of those involved in governance.
		The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ENQA guidelines) embrace similar basic principles such as responsibility, safeguarding the interest of society, effective organisational structures, transparency and visible accountability processes.
		The UK voluntary Code of Practice adopted by the Committee of University Chairmen requires that the governing body should adopt a Statement of Primary Responsibilities, relating to, amongst others, approval of the mission and strategic vision of the institution, long-term business plans, key performance indicators and annual budgets, and ensuring that they meet the interests of stakeholders.
1.4.3	The institution should have in place a system of appointment of members to its governing body and key committees and a procedure for periodical review of the performance of these members.	In Australia, the National Governance Protocols, as part of the Higher Education Support Act, states that the governing body of post-secondary education institutions not eligible for general Commonwealth-funded places should have systematic procedures for nomination of prospective members.

	Components of the Code	Individual examples in the Consultancy Study
1.4.4	The institution should ensure that members of its governing body and key committees are aware of their roles and responsibilities by providing, for example, programmes of induction and professional development.	In Australia, the National Governance Protocols, as part of the Higher Education Support Act, specify, among other things, that the governing body of post-secondary education institutions not eligible for general Commonwealth-funded places should state its objectives and functions and have an appropriate system of delegation, the duties of its members and sanctions for the breach of such duties; to make available a programme of induction and professional development for its members; to ensure its members are aware of their roles and responsibilities and at regular intervals to assess its performance and its conformance with these Protocols.
1.4.5	The institution should have in place a written code of conduct for members of its governing board and key committees and staff, spelling out their duties, a procedure for declaration of interests, requirements that its management or employees should not involve in outside employment or business interests in conflict or potential conflict with the business of the institution and sanctions for the breach of the code.	The Governance Code of Legislation, Principles, Best Practices and Guidelines drawn up for Irish universities requires that all universities should have written codes of conduct for members of the governing body and employees, developed via a participative approach, and that members of the governing body are required to disclose outside employment and business interests that may be in conflict or potential conflict with the business of the university, that the management or employees of the university should not involve in outside employment or business interests in conflict or potential conflict with the business of the university.
1.4.6	The institution should have in place a system of periodical audits of its management processes to ensure that procedures and guidelines are complied with.	The UK voluntary Code of Practice adopted by the Committee of University Chairmen requires that the governing body should meet at sufficiently regular intervals in order to discharge its duties effectively.
1.4.7	The institution should publish the composition, membership and terms of reference of its governing body and key committees.	The UK voluntary Code of Practice adopted by the Committee of University Chairmen requires that the institution shall maintain and publicly disclose a register of interests of members of the governing body.
2	**Programme design and delivery**	
2.1	*Quality assurance structures and processes*	

Components of the Code	Individual examples in the Consultancy Study
2.1.1 Institutions should set out their framework for managing academic standards and quality and develop QA mechanism and procedures that are clear and transparent to all their stakeholders including staff, existing and prospective students, employers and relevant professional bodies as well as members of the public.	The Tripartite Liaison Committee recommended in its handbook "Good practices in quality assurance" that the QA management structures should be in place, with procedures that are transparent to all stakeholders involved in the process. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education requires that higher education institutions set out their framework for managing academic standards and QA and enhancement and describe the data and information used to support its implementation.
2.1.2 Institutions should have in place formalised procedures for programme design and approval, ensuring that learners' goals in terms of employment and articulation to further study are met and allowing stakeholders including staff, students, employers and the profession to contribute to or participate in the academic decision-making process.	Good practices of a number of institutions are presented in the handbook (Good practices in quality assurance) published by the Tripartite Liaison Committee, demonstrating the need to ensure that learners' goals in terms of employment and articulation to further study are taken into account in programme design.
2.1.3 To ensure transparency, the formalised procedures for programme design and approval should be explained clearly to staff, existing and prospective students.	The Irish Higher Education Quality Network has identified a set of common principles of good practices, which includes the requirement that all providers should be responsible for the establishment of QA procedures that are clear and transparent to all their stakeholders, including staff, students, external stakeholders and the general public.
2.1.4 To facilitate existing and prospective students in making informed decision on their choice of institutions and programmes, institutions should provide as much information as possible on details of their programmes including programme contents, admission criteria, intended learning outcomes and articulation pathways for further education.	
2.2 *Programme monitoring and reviews*	
2.2.1 Institutions should put in place a formalised system of conducting regular monitoring and reviews in an objective manner to assess programme effectiveness, validity and relevance. Stakeholders including staff, students and employers should be kept informed suitably, and the formalised system should have incorporated feedback from stakeholders like academic staff, students, graduates and employers.	UNESCO and OECD, in their 2005 guidelines on the quality of cross-border higher education, recommended that higher education institutions should develop, maintain or review current internal quality management systems so that they make full use of the competencies of stakeholders such as academic staff, administrators, students and graduates and provide accurate, reliable and easily accessible information on the criteria and procedures of external and internal QA.

	Components of the Code	**Individual examples in the Consultancy Study**
2.2.2	Institutions should publish outcomes of their QA and programme reviews in a manner that is clear and readily accessible to stakeholders like staff, students and employers.	In Asia, the 'Chiba Principles' for QA in higher education in the Asia-Pacific require that for internal QA, appropriate and current information about the institution, its programmes, awards and achievements should be made publicly available. The quality assessment standards and criteria should be made publicly available and applied consistently and that the assessment would normally include: (1) institutional self-assessment; (2) external assessment by a group of experts and site visits as agreed; (3) publication of a report, including decisions and recommendations; and (4) a follow-up procedure to review actions taken in light of recommendations made.
3	**Staff, other resources and student support**	
3.1	*Staffing and staff development*	
3.1.1	Institutions should have a fair and transparent human resources system which includes policies such as appointment, appraisal, promotion and termination, as well as policies and measures to facilitate staff development and to encourage and recognise good performance.	In the Institutional Review conducted by HKCAAVQ, institutions are required to have "a clear staff employment and development policy readily accessible by existing and potential employees. It should also have a medium- to long-term staffing plan that fits its current and planned purposes."
3.2	*Learning and teaching resources*	
3.2.1	Institutions should ensure that there are adequate staff and learning and teaching facilities to support their programmes of study at an acceptable level of quality on a continuing basis.	In Europe, the ENQA guidelines include recommendations that institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered. The guidelines also contain recommendations that institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities. More specifically, it is recommended that the information systems should, depending to some extent on local circumstances, cover learning resources available and their costs.

	Components of the Code	Individual examples in the Consultancy Study
3.2.2	Institutions should publish information on staffing and learning and teaching facilities available to support programme delivery and student admission targets.	The website "Concourse for Self-financing Post-secondary Education" launched by the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education contains information related to individual institutions on the facilities available and the student target admission. The Information Portal for Accredited Post-secondary Programmes ("iPASS") also contains information related to individual institutions on the number of teaching staff, student enrolment and the staff-staff ratio. Such information is useful to prospective students giving them an idea of staff and teaching facilities available to support the level of student enrolment.
3.3	*Student support*	
3.3.1	Institutions should ensure that adequate support is given to students through induction and orientation, the provision of diverse learning experience to meet different learning needs of students, pastoral care and counselling, to facilitate the development of generic skills and whole-person development, underpinned by the institutions' commitment to outcome-based learning.	The Tripartite Liaison Committee, in its handbook "Good practices in quality assurance", has identified a number of good practices of institutions in ensuring that adequate support is given to students through induction and orientation, the provision of diverse learning experience to meet different learning needs of students and counselling and mentorship, to facilitate the development of generic skills and whole-person development, underpinned by the commitment to outcome-based learning.
3.3.2	For institutions admitting non-local students, measures should be in place to help non-local students adapt to learning and teaching at the institutions and daily living in Hong Kong, and to facilitate the integration of local and non-local students in programme and other student activities.	The Danish Code of Conduct specifies that institutions should lay down principles for the composition of classes or groups, so that within each study programme the best possible relationships may be established between students of different nationalities, including Danish and international students, and individual consideration can be taken with regard to specific cultural elements. In addition, institutions should also organise activities and make suggestions as to how staff and students may be inspired to meet across national and cultural boundaries in their leisure time, and how Danish students can take their share of the responsibility for the highest possible degree of integration throughout the programme.

Components of the Code	Individual examples in the Consultancy Study
3.3.3 Institutions should provide clear information to prospective students on the process for application and admission to their programmes, tuition fees, admission requirements, programme contents, intended learning outcomes, professional recognition if applicable, articulation pathways and employment prospects to help them in selecting institutions and programmes.	The Danish Code of Conduct specifies that all institutions should ensure that potential applicants receive updated and reliable information, including the language of instruction used in each study programme. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education recommended that higher education institutions should describe the process for application and admission to the programme of study, make available to prospective students information to help them select their programme with an understanding of the academic environment in which they will be studying and the support that will be made available to them, set out what they expect of current students and what current students can expect of the higher education providers.
3.3.4 Institutions should keep existing students fully informed of the policies and regulations governing students' rights and responsibilities, course assessment and appeal mechanism.	The Tripartite Liaison Committee pointed out in its handbook "Good practices in quality assurance" that a number of institutions have incorporated their academic regulations on course requirements and assessment, grading system and graduation requirements and regulations governing college examinations into their prospectus for students, aligned assessment tasks with learning outcomes, adopted continuous assessment, standardisation of marking and student feedback, and the use of internal moderation and external examiners as well as a panel or board to review cases requiring special attention and a system of appeals.