



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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8 April 2015

Clerk to Panel on Education
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Miss Polly Yeung)

Dear Miss Yeung,

**Follow-up to
meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Education
held on 16 March 2015**

In response to Members' request for supplementary information on specific issues at the meeting of the Panel on Education held on 16 March 2015, we provide the relevant information at Annex I and Annex II respectively for Members' information.

Yours sincerely,

(Wallace Lau)

for Secretary for Education

c.c. Secretary-General, University Grants Committee (Attn.: Ms Sharon Ho)

**Admission of non-local students to
postgraduate programmes funded by the University Grants Committee**

Research is crucial to higher education development and enhancing the competitiveness of an economy. With a view to boosting the research capability of Hong Kong through attracting high quality talents from around the world, the Government accepted and the Panel on Education of the Legislative Council was briefed on the University Grants Committee (UGC)'s recommendation in 2002 that the quota for non-local research postgraduate (RPg) students should be removed for the UGC-funded institutions. The UGC's recommendation, which was formulated after extensive consultation with the institutions, academics and the community at large, is conducive to attracting the best talents worldwide to enhance the research quality of Hong Kong, thereby ensuring that public money is spent on the most worthy causes, and is in line with the international practice. In contrast, imposing restrictions on the number of non-local students for RPg programmes would only pose hindrance to the pursuit of academic excellence by the local higher education sector and lead to a loss of high quality research talents and projects to other places. It should be noted that top-notch universities worldwide also have a relatively high proportion of non-local postgraduate students, e.g. 62% for the University of Oxford.

2. In fact, RPg students play an important role in the higher education sector. Apart from participating directly in a large number of research activities, they are also engaged in the teaching activities of institutions (as teaching assistants, laboratory administrators, etc.) and serve as a bridge between undergraduates and the teaching staff, thereby making contributions to teaching and the passing on of knowledge in institutions.

3. The decision of local graduates on whether and where to pursue postgraduate studies, especially RPg programmes, is a personal choice affected by such factors as prevailing employment opportunities in the market, students' career orientation and prospect in the teaching/research fields, rather than the terms offered to students for their graduate studies. Furthermore, among local students who choose to pursue RPg studies, many would do so with overseas universities, so that they could conduct research within a different culture and environment. Indeed, based on the number of applications, the chance for local students to be admitted to UGC-funded RPg programmes is more than double of that for non-local students. Moreover, UGC-funded institutions have yet to fully utilise their over-enrolment capacity, which means if applications for RPg programmes are received from outstanding local students, UGC-funded institutions still have spare capacity to consider their admission on a merit basis.

4. In the 2014/15 academic year, the number of students pursuing UGC-funded RPg programmes is 7 103¹, including 1 427 local students and 5 676 non-local students. According to the information provided by the UGC-funded institutions, in the 2013/14 academic year, the average student unit cost for each UGC-funded RPg place is \$475,000 per annum². This cost figure is derived from the actual cost of UGC expenditure items as reported by the institutions.

¹ Provisional figure in terms of full-time equivalent students.

² Provisional figure.

**Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme
Figures on applications for the 2015/16 academic year**

The Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme was launched on 25 November 2014. Hong Kong students who intend to pursue undergraduate or postgraduate programmes in world renowned universities outside Hong Kong starting from the 2015/16 academic year are invited to submit applications on or before 31 January 2015. Up to the application deadline, we have received a total of 658 applications, 548 of which are considered eligible, with 360 applying for undergraduate programmes and 188 applying for postgraduate programmes.

The selection process of the Scheme mainly comprises three stages, namely preliminary screening (from February to April 2015), shortlisting (from April to May 2015) and interview (from May to August 2015). The final awardees will be announced in August 2015 and disbursement of the scholarship and bursary will be arranged immediately afterwards. The second stage of selection, i.e. shortlisting, is now under way.