

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Education

Meeting on 13 April 2015

**Background brief on issues related to
the provision of hostels for post-secondary students**

Purpose

This paper summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Members on the provision of hostels for students of University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded institutions.

Existing policy

2. Under the prevailing policy, UGC-funded institutions are provided with publicly-funded student hostel places calculated according to the following criteria –

- (a) all undergraduate students should be given the opportunity to stay in student hostels for at least one year in the course of their study; and
- (b) all research postgraduate students, non-local students as well as undergraduate students whose daily travelling time exceed four hours should be provided with student hostel places.

According to UGC, publicly-funded hostel places should only be allocated to students of publicly-funded programmes.

3. The above criteria are applicable to all UGC-funded institutions, except for Lingnan University ("LU") and the Hong Kong Institute of Education ("HKIEd"). Provision of hostel places in these two institutions are higher, i.e. 50% of their full-time degree student population, having regard to LU's remote location and its mission to develop into a residential liberal arts university, and the potential merits that hostel life would bring to the quality of pre-service teacher education for HKIEd.

4. Under the existing arrangements, the Government will fund up to 75% of the capital cost of the approved level of publicly-funded student hostel provision, with the remainder to be met by the institutions concerned using their own sources of private funding.

5. The Administration introduced the Start-up Loan Scheme ("SLS") in 2001 to provide interest-free loans to non-profit-making post-secondary education providers. In May 2012, the Finance Committee ("FC") approved the extension of the ambit of SLS to support the development of student hostels for the self-financing tertiary education sector. Subsequently, FC had approved the allocation of \$800 million and \$250 million from SLS to provide loans to Hang Seng School of Commerce and Chu Hai College of Higher Education Limited respectively to cover part of the development costs of campus and student hostels of the two institutions.

Major deliberations

Existing policy on provision of publicly-funded student hostel places

6. When the subject of provision of hostel places was discussed at the Panel on Education ("the Panel"), members concurred that hostel life was an essential part of university education and provided an environment conducive to learning, personal development and social interaction. However, they noted with concern that many local students, including those living in remote areas, were not provided with hostel places. As the existing criteria for calculating the overall provision of publicly-funded student hostel places at UGC-funded institutions (paragraph 2(a) and (b) above) had been formulated in 1996, some Panel members considered a review necessary.

7. At its meeting on 8 May 2008, the Panel passed a motion urging the Administration to, amongst others, revise the existing policy on the allocation of hostel places so that local students attending publicly-funded programmes in UGC-funded institutions would be given the opportunity to stay in student hostels for at least one year, while hostel places should be guaranteed for non-local students only in the first two years of their studies. In its response to the motion, the Administration indicated that should the policy be revised as proposed, more than 1 000 additional hostel places would be required. Given the implementation of the four-year undergraduate programmes and in anticipation of the increase in non-local student intake in the coming years, the Administration considered it more appropriate to first address the shortage of hostel places under the existing policy. At that time, the Administration did not consider it appropriate to shorten the duration of hostel places provided to non-local students as suggested by members.

Allocation of hostel places to local and non-local students

8. There were grave concerns that the existing arrangement of allocating hostel places might be more favourable to non-local students as it appeared that they would be provided with hostel places throughout the duration of their studies at the UGC-funded institutions, while local undergraduate students could only be guaranteed hostel places for one year of their period of study.

9. In this connection, the Panel was given to understand that the number of hostel places allocated to local and non-local students by individual institutions would depend on their individual situation. For instance, at the Panel meeting on 13 February 2012, members noted that in the case of the Hong Kong Baptist University ("HKBU"), all local students were provided with hostel places for at least one year of their studies. As for non-local students, they were provided with places in hostels located within the campus in their first year of study, and in premises leased by HKBU outside the campus in their second year of study. Due to the shortage of hostel places, non-local students could only be guaranteed hostel places in the first two years of study but not for the entire period of their study at HKBU. At the same meeting, members noted that according to the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology ("HKUST"), its local students were guaranteed hostel places for at least one year. In the past, non-local students were provided with hostel places throughout the duration of their study. However, with the increase in non-local students in recent years, HKUST could only guarantee the provision of hostel places to them for the first two years.

10. During the examination of the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016, members sought information on the allocation of student hostel places. According to the Administration's reply, the number of hostel places available for allocation was 34 811 and 35 672 in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years respectively. A breakdown by institutions, local and non-local students is at **Appendix I**.

Adequacy of hostel places

11. The shortfall in hostel places to meet the boarding needs of local and non-local students, in particular after the implementation of the New Academic Structure, was of major concern to the Panel. At the Panel meeting on 13 February 2012, there were suggestions that the Administration should consider converting vacant school premises and factory buildings into student hostels so as to increase the supply of hostel places.

12. In his question raised at the Council meeting of 9 January 2013, a Member raised concern about the tight supply of student hostel places among UGC-funded institutions¹. He referred to the interim hostel place scheme introduced by the Chinese University of Hong Kong ("CUHK") under which additional students were allocated to hostel rooms and the affected students were recompensed by a 20% reduction in hostel fees. The Member sought information on the accommodation needs of university students and the measures, if any, to ensure sufficient and good quality hostel places.

13. In reply, the Administration explained that the allocation of publicly-funded and privately-funded hostel places to students by individual institutions was a matter within their autonomy. The Administration and UGC had all along supported UGC-funded institutions in the development of student hostels of prescribed standards, and would continue efforts in providing publicly-funded hostel places in accordance with the existing policy. To optimize the use of limited land resources, apart from identifying new sites, the institutions were also encouraged to make use of suitable sites within the campus for hostel development or to redevelop existing campus buildings into hostels. The Government also encouraged the institutions to explore various options to meet students' demand for hostel places, such as leasing private residential premises.

Latest position

14. At the next meeting on 13 April 2015, the Panel will be consulted on the financial proposal to construct two student hostel blocks within the northern campus of CUHK to provide a total of 676 hostel places.

Relevant papers

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

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Legislative Council Secretariat
8 April 2015

¹ See Question no. 13 raised by Hon CHAN Kin-por at the Council meeting of 9 January 2013.

**Statistics on Allocation of Student Hostel Places in 2013-2014
and 2014-2015 Academic Years**

Institution	2013-2014 academic year						
	Number of hostel places available for allocation ¹	Applications ²					
		Local students			Non-local students		
		Number received ³	Number successful	Success rate	Number received ⁴	Number successful	Success rate
City University of Hong Kong	3 648	3 903	1 685	43%	2 480	1 945	78%
Hong Kong Baptist University	2 081	2 350	1 267	54%	1 750	814	47%
Lingnan University	2 234	1 979	1 683	85%	444	444	100%
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	8 175	7 291	4 804	66%	3 670	3 352	91%
The Hong Kong Institute of Education	2 220	2 052	1 827	89%	388	388	100%
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	4 983	4 065	2 623	65%	2 777	2 282	82%
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	5 284	4 827	2 651	55%	3 055	2 497	82%
The University of Hong Kong	6 186	6 694	3 184	48%	6 389	2 742	43%
Total	34 811	33 161	19 724	59%	20 953	14 464	69%

Institution	2014-2015 academic year						
	Number of hostel places available for allocation ¹	Applications ²					
		Local students			Non-local students		
		Number received ³	Number successful	Success rate	Number received ⁴	Number successful	Success rate
City University of Hong Kong	3 648	3 859	1 614	42%	2 595	2 025	78%
Hong Kong Baptist University	2 087	2 324	1 276	55%	1 706	811	48%
Lingnan University	2 571	1 813	1 813	100%	629	629	100%
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	8 615	7 220	5 271	73%	3 506	3 344	95%
The Hong Kong Institute of Education	2 220	2 180	1 789	82%	413	412	100%
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	4 983	3 958	2 499	63%	2 881	2 480	86%
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	5 092	4 918	2 202	45%	3 795	2 680	71%
The University of Hong Kong	6 456	6 421	3 019	47%	6 875	3 026	44%
Total	35 672	32 693	19 483	60%	22 400	15 407	69%

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- 1 Include publicly-funded and privately-funded hostel places as well as temporary places available for allocation.
 - 2 Include repeated applications from students who have resided in hostels in the past.
 - 3 Include applications from local students enrolled in UGC-funded and non-UGC funded programmes.
 - 4 Include applications from non-local students enrolled in UGC-funded and non-UGC funded programmes. Exchange students are also included.

Source : The Controlling Officer's Reply (Serial No. EDB257) in the examination of the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016.

Appendix II

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Education	8.5.2008 (Item V)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>CB(2)1793/07-08(05)</u> <u>CB(2)2536/07-08(01)</u> <u>CB(2)2590/07-08(01)</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Education	12.12.2011 (Item IV)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>CB(2)486/11-12(02)</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Panel on Education	13.2.2012 (Item IV)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>CB(2)968/11-12(01)</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Legislative Council	9.1.2013	<u>Official Record of Proceedings</u> <u>Pages 103-106 (Question 13)</u>
Finance Committee	1.4.2015	<u>Administration's replies to</u> <u>Members initial written</u> <u>questions in examining the</u> <u>Estimates of Expenditure 2015-</u> <u>2016 (Reply serial number :</u> <u>EDB257)</u>

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