

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Education Diploma Yi Jin Programme

Introduction

In May 2012, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved a financial commitment of \$1 billion for implementing the Diploma Yi Jin (DYJ) Programme¹ for an initial period of five academic years from 2012/13. This paper informs Members the Government's plan to continue to implement the Programme for a further five academic years from 2017/18 using the remaining fund of the said financial commitment.

Objectives of the Diploma Yi Jin Programme

2. Launched in 2012, the DYJ Programme aims to –
 - (a) provide an alternative pathway for secondary 6 school-leavers as well as adult learners to obtain a formal qualification for the purposes of employment and further study;
 - (b) 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 in these aspects; and
 - (c) strengthen students' motivation to study and facilitate students in developing self-learning skills for the pursuit of further study independently.

Programme structure and Qualification recognition

3. The DYJ Programme which can be studied either full-time or part-time comprises five core courses (i.e. Chinese, English, Mathematics, Liberal Studies and Communication Skills) and a choice of three elective courses of practical nature to cater for different interests and aptitudes of students. Elective clusters available in the 2016/17 academic year include business and accounting studies, child and elderly care, hospitality and tourism, airline and logistic services, language, design and music

¹ Formerly known as Yi Jin Diploma, the Programme was retitled as Diploma Yi Jin (in English) from January 2016 in compliance with the Award Title Scheme under the Qualifications Framework.

studies, among others.

4. The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) has assessed and confirmed that for students who have successfully completed the DYJ Programme, the qualification thus obtained is deemed comparable to the attainment of Level 2 standard in five subjects including Chinese Language and English Language subjects in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination. The DYJ qualification hence meets the common descriptor for admission to Associate Degree and Higher Diploma or equivalent programmes. For students who have successfully completed the Maths Plus elective courses, the qualification acquired under the DYJ Programme is comparable to the attainment of Level 2 standard in five subjects including Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics in the HKDSE Examination. The Diploma Yi Jin is also recognised under the Qualifications Framework as meeting the accreditation standards at Qualifications Framework (QF) Level 3. The DYJ qualification is accepted by the Government as meeting the academic entry requirement of over 30 civil service posts which require Level 2 standard in five subjects including Chinese Language and English Language in the HKDSE Examination. These posts include Ambulanceman, Assistant Census and Survey Officer, Customs Officer, Fireman, Police Constable, Postal Officer, Social Security Assistant and Welfare Worker, etc.

Current Delivery, Enrolment and Financial Position

5. The DYJ Programme is currently run by seven member institutions of the Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE)² namely –

- Caritas Institute of Community Education
- Hong Kong College of Technology
- Hong Kong Institute of Technology
- Li Ka Shing Institute of Professional and Continuing Education, The Open University of Hong Kong
- Lingnan Institute of Further Education
- School of Business and Information Systems, Vocational Training Council
- School of Continuing Education, Hong Kong Baptist University

6. Since the launch of the Programme in 2012/13 academic year, four cohorts of full-time students have completed their study under the Programme and one cohort which has commenced their study since September 2016 is about to complete their study this summer. Part-time classes have also started since 2012/13 academic year and enrolment has been ongoing over the years. The enrolment figures are set out in the table below -

² The Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE) aims to advance the quality of, promote collaboration among and share good practices in the self-financing tertiary education. FSTE members include the self-financing arm of all publicly-funded universities in Hong Kong and major non-profit-making institutions providing tertiary/continuing education in Hong Kong.

Academic Year	Enrolment figures of DYJ		
	Full-time	Part-time ³	Total
2012/13	5 040	970	6 010
2013/14	4 597	1 164	5 761
2014/15	4 910	1 100	6 010
2015/16	4 235	1 126	5 361
2016/17	4 078	1 130 ⁴	5 210 ³

7. Tuition fee for the Programme for 2016/17 AY ranges from \$35,000 to \$37,300. Students of the Programme will receive reimbursement of 30% of the tuition fees paid for each satisfactorily completed course. Students who have passed the means test conducted by the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency will receive 100% or 50% reimbursement of the tuition fees paid for each satisfactorily completed course. These students may also apply for (a) loan under the Extended Non-means-tested Loan Scheme; (b) flat-rate academic expense grant; (c) subsidy under the Study Travel Subsidy Scheme; and (d) subsidy under the Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges.

8. The approved financial commitment of \$1 billion is mainly for the reimbursement of tuition fees to eligible students. The remaining funding have been used for providing enhanced support services to students and teachers of the DYJ Programme including the running of activities to enhance the whole person development of students, provision of professional development training to teachers as well as meeting other expenses such as publicity, studies and surveys for the DYJ Programme. The total expenditure for running the DYJ Programme for the first five academic years is projected to be some \$460 to \$470 million, with breakdown as follows –

³ For enrolment calculation, to avoid duplication in counting, part-time enrolment is presented in full-time-equivalent terms by dividing the product of the total part-time enrolment headcount and the contact hours of the courses under the DYJ enrolled by these students by the total hours of study required for graduation under the DYJ Programme, i.e. 600 hours.

⁴ Provisional figure as part-time enrolment for the Programme is ongoing throughout the academic year and the academic year has not completed yet.

Financial Year	Expenditure		
	Reimbursement of Tuition Fee	Other Spending ⁵	Total
	(A) (\$ M)	(B) (\$ M)	(C)=(A)+(B) (\$ M)
2012-13FY	NA ⁶	9	9
2013-14FY	81	8	89
2014-15FY	81	8	89
2015-16FY	91	8	99
2016-17FY	79	10	89
2017-18FY ⁷	80	8	88
Total:	412	51	463

The remaining balance of the financial commitment for running the Programme for five academic years from 2012/13 is projected to be around \$530 - \$540 million.

Value and Effectiveness of DYJ

9. To track the articulation and employment status of students after their completion of the DYJ Programme, a graduate tracking survey was conducted annually by the FSTE around 6 months from students' completion of the Programme. Findings of the survey in the past years are summarised below for easy reference -

Year of graduation	Percentage in Employment	Percentage Furthering Their Studies
2013	54%	33%
2014	52%	36%
2015	46%	40%

⁵ "Other Spending" includes support services for students and teachers of the DYJ Programme, surveys, studies and publicity.

⁶ Tuition fee reimbursement is payable to eligible students upon their satisfactory completion of courses under the Programme. As the DYJ was first launched in the 2012/13 academic year, the first cohort of students graduated only in July 2013 and tuition fee reimbursement to the first cohort was made only in the 2013-14 financial year.

⁷ Projected spending under Column (A) for reimbursement of tuition fee to students of the 2016/17 cohort and under Column (b) for residual payment of spendings incurred in 2016/17 academic year for various studies, surveys and reviews, etc.

It is noted that each year over 85% of the respondents are engaged in either employment or furthering their studies in the first year after completing the DYJ Programme. We are therefore convinced that the DYJ Programme has fulfilled its mission in providing an alternative pathway to secondary school-leavers and adult learners to obtain a formal qualification for employment and study.

10. To further gauge feedback on the effectiveness of the DYJ Programme, a survey was conducted in 2016 with employers of graduates and teachers of articulation programmes as well as graduates of the Programme. The survey found that employers and teachers of articulation programmes were satisfied with the performance of graduates in respect of their language proficiency, numeric and information technology competence, critical reflection ability, attitude towards work and learning, problem solving ability and sense of responsibility, etc. Graduates surveyed were also positive about their experience in and their gain from the DYJ Programme. They all saw improvement and growth in themselves after joining the DYJ Programme in terms of their personal attitude, sense of responsibility, social skills, and problem-solving ability, etc. They also confirmed that through their successful completion of the DYJ Programme, they had obtained a formal qualification for furthering their studies or employment. In sum, the findings of the survey with all three categories of stakeholders corroborate that the DYJ Programme has attained its objectives in providing a viable alternative pathway for secondary school-leavers and adult learners to attain a qualification for study and employment.

Recommendation

11. In the light of the steady enrolment over the years and the positive feedback of stakeholders, the Government sees a continual need for the DYJ Programme at least in the short to medium term and hence proposes to run the Programme for a further five years initially from 2017/18 academic year.

Financial Implication

12. It is estimated that the DYJ Programme will have an annual total enrolment of 5 400 to 5 800 including full-time and part-time students. If the DYJ Programme continues to run for five academic years from 2017/18 academic year, assuming an annual enrolment of 5 400 to 5 800, the estimated expenditure for the period will be as follows –

Financial year	Projected Expenditure		
	For Tuition Fee Reimbursement	For other purposes	Total
	a	b	c = a + b
	(\$M)	(\$M)	(\$M)
2017-18 ⁸		4	4
2018-19 ⁹	85	12	97
2019-20	85	12	97
2020-21	85	12	97
2021-22	85	12	97
2022-23	85	12	97
2023-24 ¹⁰	5	4	9
Total	430	68	498

The projected balance of the financial commitment is estimated to be sufficient to cover the cashflow requirement for supporting the implementation for five more academic years as set out above.

13. The Government will propose to the Finance Committee to continue to run the Programme for a further five academic years from 2017/18 using the remaining fund available in existing financial commitment.

Advice Sought

14. Members are invited to note this paper.

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⁸ Cashflow to cater for preparatory spending e.g. publicity and teacher training etc.

⁹ Tuition fee reimbursement to be made upon satisfactory completion of the Programme. Hence, payment for the 2017/18 cohort will be payable only in the 2018/19 financial year.

¹⁰ Cashflow to cater for delay in processing of (a) some cases of tuition fee reimbursement claim and (b) certain payment for support services and other expenses, caused by late submission of requisite supporting documents.