

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Extension of Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme

Purpose

This paper informs Members the Government's plan to extend the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme (the Scheme) for one more cohort in 2018/19 academic year, as an interim arrangement, by using the remaining balance of the approved commitment.

Background

2. In May 2014, the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council approved a non-recurrent commitment of \$348 million to launch the Scheme to support outstanding local students to pursue studies in world renowned universities outside Hong Kong, with a view to grooming a top cadre of talents with global vision, international network and world-class education, thereby contributing to enhancing Hong Kong's competitiveness as Asia's World City in a globalised knowledge economy. The Scheme also seeks to support those students who have excellent academic achievement but lack the financial means to study in top-notch universities outside Hong Kong.

3. The Scheme intended to benefit three cohorts of students, with up to 100 students per cohort, starting from the 2015/16 academic year and then be subject to a review on its effectiveness. All awardees will receive a non-means-tested scholarship to cover their tuition fees, subject to a ceiling of \$250,000 per annum, whichever is lower. In addition, a means-tested bursary will be granted to students who may need additional support to pursue their study, subject to a ceiling of \$200,000 per student per annum.

4. A merit-based approach is adopted for the selection of awardees, targeting the best and most outstanding Hong Kong students who are admitted to world renowned universities or programmes. Selection is based on the academic achievements and other attributes such as leadership qualities and potential, contribution and commitment to the society, etc.

5. By February 2017, we have awarded scholarships to two cohorts of students and have invited applications for the third cohort. For the first and second cohorts, we received 658 and 681 applications respectively. Amongst all, 185 applicants were awarded the scholarship. Some key statistics of the

awardees are at **Annex** for reference. For the third cohort, we received 856 applications and they are currently being processed. As at April 2017, 18 awardees from the first cohorts have graduated (all of them pursued postgraduate studies) and returned to Hong Kong.

Recommendation and Justifications

6. Since its launch in 2014, the Scheme has been well received by the community. The number of applications has been on the rise. Meanwhile, we are in the course of assessing the effectiveness of the Scheme, in particular as to whether it could successfully facilitate the grooming of a top cadre of talents who would contribute to the development of Hong Kong in various aspects upon their graduation. As mentioned in paragraph 5 above, we only have 18 graduates under the Scheme for the time-being. In order to conduct a reliable and comprehensive review, we believe a larger pool of awardees and graduates would be desirable. It is therefore our plan to include the feedback and information on employment/further studies of those graduates who will return to Hong Kong this summer (the number of which is about 48) in our review. We aim to complete the review in around the third or fourth quarter of 2017. On the basis of the review results, we will actively consider whether the Scheme should be regularised, and if so how to enhance the various parameters of the Scheme through feedback to be collected from the awardees.

7. According to the above schedule, the way forward of the Scheme could only be formulated in the fourth quarter of 2017 or the first quarter of 2018 at the earliest. However, most overseas institutions would require the applicants for undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the 2018/19 academic year to submit applications by December of 2017. To enable the Scheme to continue in the 2018/19 academic year, and taking into account that the funding approved in the original commitment has not been fully used up, it is the Government's plan, as an interim arrangement, to extend the scheme for one cohort in the 2018/19 academic year with the remaining fund of the original commitment. The existing eligibility, selection criteria and other conditions of the Scheme shall remain unchanged for the extended cohort.

Financial Implication

8. The uncommitted balance of the non-recurrent commitment approved by FC for the Scheme is \$295 million as at 31 March 2017. The actual and estimated expenditure of the first three cohort from 2015-16 to 2021-22 are as follows –

Item	2015-16 (actual) \$'000	2016-17 (actual) \$'000	2017-18 (estimate) \$'000	2018-19 (estimate) \$'000	2019-20 (estimate) \$'000	2020-21 (estimate) \$'000	2021-22 (estimate) \$'000	Total
(a) Scholarship/ Bursary	19,991	31,780	47,293	33,653	19,015	6,980	660	159,372
(b) Cost of engaging temporary staff	657	537	684	684	684	684	684	4,614
Total	20,648	32,317	47,977	34,337	19,699	7,664	1,344	163,986

9. Based on past scholarship disbursement pattern, the total expenditure for the extended cohort is estimated to be in the range of \$40 to 60 million. The estimated uncommitted balance after the first three cohorts is \$184 million, which should be sufficient to cover the expenditure for one more cohort.

Way Forward

10. Members are invited to note the content of this paper. The Government will report the proposed extension of the Scheme to FC by way of an information note.

Education Bureau
April 2017

**Key Statistics of Awardees of the
Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme
(2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years)**

(A) By level of study

<u>Level of Study</u>	<u>No. of awardees (% over total)</u>
Undergraduate	119 (64%)
Postgraduate	66 (36%)
Total:	185

(B) By Gender

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Number of Awardees (% over total)</u>
Male	90 (49%)
Female	95 (51%)
Total:	185

(C) By Institution / University

<u>Institution / University</u>	<u>Number of Awardees (% over total)</u>
University of Cambridge (UK)	27 (15%)
London School of Economics and Political Science (UK)	22 (12%)
University of Oxford (UK)	18 (10%)
University College London (UK)	17 (9%)
Imperial College London (UK)	13 (7%)
King's College London (UK)	9 (5%)
University of Edinburgh (UK)	7 (4%)
Harvard University (US)	5 (3%)
New York University (US)	5 (3%)
Durham University (UK)	3 (2%)
Guildhall School of Music and Drama (UK)	3 (2%)
University of Bristol (UK)	3 (2%)
University of California, Berkeley (US)	3 (2%)
University of Chicago (US)	3 (2%)
University of Pennsylvania (US)	3 (2%)
Yale University (US)	3 (2%)
Anglia Ruskin University (UK)	2 (1%)
Columbia University (US)	2 (1%)
Cornell University (US)	2 (1%)
Goldsmiths, The University of London (UK)	2 (1%)
Princeton University (US)	2 (1%)

<u>Institution / University</u>	<u>Number of Awardees</u> <u>(% over total)</u>
Royal College of Music (UK)	2 (1%)
University of Glasgow (UK)	2 (1%)
University of Manchester (UK)	2 (1%)
University of Toronto (Canada)	2 (1%)
Others (Australia, Spain, UK, US)	23 (12%)
Total:	185