

Education

In an increasingly competitive and connected world, education is of vital importance. Reflecting that, total government expenditure on education has increased from \$54.3 billion in 2005-06 to \$79.1 billion in 2015-16 revised estimates, or 18.5 per cent of total government spending.

Overview of Education in Hong Kong

Education is compulsory for every child in Hong Kong from the age of six. To meet the different needs of students, there are various types of schools in Hong Kong. The government provides 12 years' free primary and secondary education to all students in public-sector schools, which form the majority in the local school system. These consist of government schools operated directly by the government and aided schools (generally run by religious or charitable organisations) which are fully subvented by the government but managed by their own incorporated management committee or school management committee. In addition, there are Direct Subsidy Scheme schools (which can charge school fees, receive government subvention based on enrolment and enjoy greater flexibility in various areas) and self-financed private schools providing alternatives to parents.

Hong Kong's 51 international schools (including 15 operated by the English Schools Foundation) provide around 41,000 places as of September 2015, catering to the demand of overseas families living in Hong Kong and families coming to Hong Kong for work or investment. Generally operated on a self-financing basis, these schools offer different non-local curricula, including those of the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Singapore, the United States, and others such as the International Baccalaureate programme.

Both publicly funded and self-financing post-secondary programmes are provided at different levels, including sub-degree, undergraduate and above. The publicly funded programmes are provided by the eight University Grants Committee-funded institutions, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and the Vocational Training Council (VTC). Diverse self-financing post-secondary programmes of quality are provided by post-secondary institutions (including the publicly funded institutions and their self-financing arms) with a choice of study pathways and multiple entry and exit points.

Government's Role in Education

The Secretary for Education, who heads the Education Bureau, formulates, develops and reviews educational policies, secures funds from the government budget, and oversees the implementation of educational programmes with the assistance of the Permanent Secretary for Education.

Expenditure on Education

The total budgeted government expenditure on education in the 2015-16 financial year is \$79.3 billion (18 per cent of total government expenditure), of which \$71.4 billion is recurrent expenditure on education (22 per cent of total recurrent government expenditure).

Education Commission

The Education Commission advises the government on education objectives and policies and co-ordinates the work of all major education-related advisory bodies in the planning and development of education at all levels. The commission also advises the government on important implementation issues.

The commission comprises a chairman, a vice-chairman who is the Permanent Secretary for Education, eight ex-officio members and a number of non-official members. The eight ex-officio members comprise the chairpersons of the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education, the Curriculum Development Council, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Council, the Quality Education Fund Steering Committee, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, the University Grants Committee and the VTC. The non-official members come from both education and non-education fields.

Kindergarten Education

Pre-primary education is not compulsory and all kindergartens are privately run in Hong Kong. The government's Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) provides a non-means-tested direct fee subsidy for children with right of abode in Hong Kong aged above two years and eight months attending eligible local non-profit-making kindergartens. In the 2015-16 school year, about 185,400 children were enrolled in 1,000 kindergartens/kindergarten-cum-child care centres. About 76 per cent of students and 96 per cent of local non-profit-making kindergartens benefited under the PEVS. A means-tested fee remission scheme is also available to needy families to ensure that no child will be deprived of kindergarten education because of lack of means. Under the PEVS, quality assurance for kindergartens is enhanced through a self-evaluation system, supported by an external review process.

All kindergartens are required to employ qualified kindergarten teachers and, starting from 2012-13, kindergartens under the PEVS should employ teachers with a Certificate in Early Childhood Education on a teacher to pupil ratio of 1:15. With effect from 2009-10, all newly appointed kindergarten principals must have a bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education.

Providing free kindergarten education is one of the priorities of the current-term government and a committee set up by the bureau in April 2013 to make specific proposals on how to

implement this submitted its report in May 2015. The bureau will take the committee's recommendations and the public's views into account in formulating a new policy and specific measures to provide good-quality kindergarten education.

Primary Education

Six years' free education is provided for students in public-sector primary schools. Primary education starts when a child is aged around six. In September 2015, a total of 273,006 children were enrolled in 454 public-sector primary schools (34 government schools and 420 aided schools). In addition, 21 Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) primary schools offered 15,862 school places and 53 private primary schools offered 36,164 school places.

Admissions to Primary 1 (the first year of primary education) in public-sector schools are administered through the centralised Primary One Admission System, divided into two stages: the Discretionary Places Admission (DP) stage and the Central Allocation (CA) stage. Each primary school will earmark about 50 per cent of its Primary 1 places as discretionary places. During the DP stage, parents may apply to only one government or aided school in or outside the school catchment area (or 'school net', as it is known in Hong Kong) in which they reside. The remaining 50 per cent of Primary 1 places are for CA and 10 per cent of these are for Unrestricted School Choices. Parents may choose up to three schools from any school nets for their child. The remaining 90 per cent of CA places are for Restricted School Choices. Parents should select primary schools in their school net in order of preference.

Secondary Education

Six years' free education is also provided for students in public-sector secondary schools. In September 2015, a total of 282,525 students were enrolled in 393 public-sector secondary schools (360 aided schools, 31 government schools and two caput schools that are subsidised according to the number of students admitted). In addition, there were 61 DSS secondary schools offering 57,340 school places and 22 private secondary schools offering 7,761 school places.

Since September 2009, all students can now benefit from three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary education leading to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination.

Subsidised Secondary 1 (the first year of secondary education) places are allocated through the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System, divided into two stages: the Discretionary Places stage and the Central Allocation (CA) stage. Participating secondary schools can reserve not more than 30 per cent of their Secondary 1 places as discretionary places and parents may apply for their child direct to not more than two secondary schools participating in the SSPA System in any districts. After the deduction of repeater and discretionary places, the secondary schools' remaining places are used for CA. Of the CA places, 10 per cent are for Unrestricted School Choices and parents may choose not more than three schools from any school net for their child. The remaining 90 per cent of CA places are for Restricted School Choices. Parents can choose a maximum of 30 schools from the school net to which their child belongs.

Students completing junior secondary education will normally remain in the same school for their senior secondary education or attend full-time fully subvented vocational training courses run by the VTC.

Senior Secondary Curriculum

The senior secondary curriculum launched in September 2009 is flexible, coherent and diversified. It aims to cater for students' varied interests, needs, aptitudes and abilities. Students take four core subjects and acquire Other Learning Experiences. In addition, they can choose two or three elective subjects from 20 senior secondary subjects, a range of Applied Learning (ApL) courses and six Other Languages.

ApL courses are introduced at Secondary 5 and 6. They place equal emphasis on practice and theory linked to broad professional and vocational fields. In the 2015-17 cohort, 40 ApL courses are offered under six areas of studies: Creative Studies; Media and Communication; Business, Management and Law; Services; Applied Science; and Engineering and Production.

On completion of their senior secondary study at Secondary 6, students can take the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination.

The HKDSE has gained extensive recognition in international benchmarking studies such as the National Recognition Information Centre report and the Tariff System of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service in the UK. The Australian government recognises the HKDSE as comparable to the Australian Senior Secondary School Certificate. Over 220 tertiary institutions worldwide, including renowned universities such as Oxford and Yale, recognise the new qualification for admission purposes, and more are being added.

In 2014, about 86 per cent of Secondary 6 graduates pursued further full-time studies, among whom about 11 per cent studied outside Hong Kong.

Under the State Ministry of Education's Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions, some Mainland higher education institutions admit Hong Kong students on the basis of their results in the HKDSE Examination and exempt them from taking the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities on the Mainland. More than 12,700 Hong Kong students submitted applications under the scheme from the 2012-13 to 2015-16 academic years, and more than 5,100 Hong Kong students were admitted by Mainland institutions. In the 2016-17 academic year, the number of participating institutions will further increase from 78 to 84, located in 14 Mainland provinces and municipalities and one autonomous region.

Chinese History Education

Chinese history is an important part of the curriculum for all primary and secondary schools. Content on Chinese history and the Chinese nation and culture is included in the General Studies subject at primary schools, while at junior secondary level, all schools must devote about two periods per week to Chinese history and culture. At the senior secondary level, Chinese History is one of the elective subjects.

Basic Law Education

To promote understanding of the Basic Law among students, the government provides a range of learning and teaching aids for schools. In 2015, the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of the Basic Law, these included Basic Law teaching videos, an inter-school online quiz competition, and professional development programmes for principals and teachers.

At junior secondary level, subjects such as Life and Society, Chinese History and History include material about the Basic Law. At senior secondary level, the Basic Law is part of Liberal Studies.

Language Education

The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research advises the government on language education issues. It also advises the Trustee of the Language Fund (which funds initiatives to improve Hong Kong people's proficiency in Chinese, including Putonghua, and English languages) on the use of the fund as well as the policy and procedures governing the fund's operation.

The government's language education policy is to train the younger generation to become biliterate in written Chinese and English and trilingual in Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English.

At the same time, the government believes students should undertake their general education in a language that is not itself a barrier to the learning process. The government's policy on medium of instruction is therefore to uphold mother-tongue teaching while enhancing students' proficiency in both Chinese and English. Public-sector primary schools generally teach in Chinese. Public-sector secondary schools can, at the junior secondary level, increase students' opportunities for exposure to, and use of, English, taking into account students' ability and desire to learn in English, teachers' capability and readiness to teach in English, and school support measures to facilitate learning in English. At the senior secondary level, schools can select either Chinese or English as the medium of instruction on a subject basis depending on the school context and the readiness and capabilities of both teachers and students.

In line with the policy goal on medium of instruction, schools are encouraged to adopt different strategies, such as creating a rich and motivating environment conducive to language learning, strengthening students' ability to 'learn to read' (i.e. learning to read independently) and to 'read to learn' (i.e. learning to read extensively and acquire knowledge) in both Chinese and English, and promoting language across the curriculum. Schools are also encouraged to provide students with opportunities to read and write across the curriculum through the use of printed and multimodal texts to motivate students, broaden their knowledge and help them relate the language to different subjects.

Native English-speaking Teacher (NET) Scheme

There are more than 400 NETs working in secondary schools and over 450 NETs working in primary schools. NETs collaborate with local English teachers to enhance teaching and make English learning experiences more authentic and engaging for students. They help create an enriched English language environment for students and promote the adoption of more

innovative teaching strategies. The NET Scheme has brought about positive changes in classroom practice and students have shown a more positive attitude towards learning English.

Support for Non-Chinese-speaking Students

The government is committed to encouraging and supporting early integration of non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) students into the community, including facilitating their adaptation to the local education system and mastery of the Chinese language. Starting from the 2014-15 school year, the bureau has implemented the 'Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework' in primary and secondary schools to help NCS students overcome the difficulties of learning Chinese as a second language and to switch to mainstream Chinese Language classes. Enhanced funding support has been provided to schools for intensive Chinese language teaching for NCS students and to create an inclusive learning environment. In addition, Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) courses pegged at the Qualifications Framework Levels 1 to 3 have been provided in phases starting from the 2014-15 school year for NCS students at the senior secondary level. Other complementary support measures such as enhancing Chinese Language teachers' capabilities in teaching Chinese as a second language and provision of learning and teaching resource packages will continue.

The Chinese Language Learning Support Centre offers support programmes for NCS students after school or during holidays. It also develops teaching resources and organises professional development workshops for teachers, and conducts workshops for parents to encourage parental support for NCS students' learning of Chinese.

To help NCS students, institutions funded by the University Grants Committee accept various Chinese language qualifications as alternatives to the HKDSE, including the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS-Level and GCE A-Level under specified circumstances for application under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System. Similar arrangements have been made for admission of NCS students to sub-degree programmes. The fees payable by NCS students taking these Chinese language examinations are subsidised so that they are the same as those for the HKDSE Chinese Language examination. NCS students with financial needs may receive half or full remission of the subsidised examination fee.

In collaboration with non-governmental organisations and with funding provided by the Language Fund, the government organises district-based programmes for NCS children aged three to nine to motivate them to learn Chinese through fun activities. Course providers have been invited to develop vocational Chinese Language courses pegged at Level 1 or 2 of the Qualifications Framework for NCS school leavers.

Special Education

Subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and with parents' consent, students with more severe or multiple disabilities are placed in special schools for intensive support. Other students with special educational needs (SEN) may attend ordinary schools. In December 2015, there were 60 special schools, 21 of which have boarding facilities, providing

around 8,900 school places and 1,100 boarding places. In September 2015, some 39,470 students with SEN were studying in public-sector ordinary primary and secondary schools.

The government provides schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training to help them cater for their students with SEN. The bureau's professional staff members visit schools regularly to advise on school policies and support measures to implement Integrated Education. Educational psychologists, audiologists and speech therapists conduct case assessment, and provide consultation and support services for schools.

The government is progressively extending the School-based Educational Psychology Service to cover all public-sector primary and secondary schools by the 2016-17 school year. As at September 2015, about 42 per cent and about 20 per cent of the teachers in public-sector primary and secondary schools respectively had completed structured training programmes to strengthen their capacity to cater for students with SEN. To enhance the support for ordinary schools to cater for students with SEN, the government increased the rates of the Learning Support Grant for public-sector primary and secondary schools by 30 per cent in the 2014-15 school year. The ceiling of the Learning Support Grant is about \$1.5 million per school per annum. The grant rates and the ceiling of the Learning Support Grant for each school are adjusted annually according to the change in the Composite Consumer Price Index.

Since the 2013-14 school year, the Endeavour Merit Award and Endeavour Scholarship have recognised excellence in post-secondary students with SEN at publicly funded and self-financing institutions respectively.

The government helps gifted students develop their capabilities through various programmes and the bureau supports schools in designing and implementing gifted development programmes for students. Learning and teaching resource packs are disseminated to schools and uploaded to the web. Professional development programmes and teachers' networks equip teachers with the necessary gifted education knowledge and skills. Various territory-wide competitions provide platforms for students to learn from one another and to demonstrate their areas of strength. Outstanding students thus identified are provided with further training and nominated to participate in international competitions.

The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education provides gifted students with a wide range of activities, including courses, workshops, competitions, conferences, mentoring and online learning. Professional development programmes are offered to teachers through thematic courses, outreach services, and the Biennial Gifted Education Conference co-organised with the bureau. Services for parents of gifted children include the Parent Education Programme, outreach and assessment and consultation.

Information Technology in Education

Building on past information technology in education (ITE) strategies and other e-learning initiatives, the government launched the Fourth Strategy on ITE in the 2015-16 school year. It includes the phased provision of wireless network services for all public-sector schools to

facilitate the use of mobile computing devices for e-learning and a comprehensive range of other supporting measures.

As at the end of 2015, 30 sets of e-textbooks covering various subjects at primary and junior secondary levels developed under the e-Textbook Market Development Scheme (EMADS) have been included on the Recommended e-Textbook List for school use. By the completion of Phase Two of the EMADS in 2016, it is expected that a further four sets of e-textbooks will have been developed.

Post-secondary Education

Overview

Hong Kong has 20 local degree-awarding post-secondary education institutions, eight of which are funded by the public through the University Grants Committee (UGC). The other 12 are the publicly funded Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and the self-financing Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Centennial College, Chu Hai College of Higher Education, Gratia Christian College, Hang Seng Management College, HKCT Institute of Higher Education, Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Open University of Hong Kong, Tung Wah College and the VTC's Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong. Together with providers offering locally accredited sub-degree programmes, there are around 30 post-secondary institutions.

In the 2015-16 academic year, around 15,170 publicly funded first-year-first-degree intake places were provided by the UGC-funded institutions and the HKAPA and about 9,060 places in the self-financing undergraduate programmes. In addition, the UGC-funded institutions and the self-financing degree-awarding institutions provided around 4,300 senior year undergraduate places and 12,200 top-up degree places respectively for graduates of sub-degree programmes and students with other qualifications. At the sub-degree level, there were around 27,000 and 11,000 intake places respectively for self-financing and publicly funded sub-degree programmes for the 2015-16 academic year.

Increasing Post-secondary Education Opportunities

The government promotes the sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary sector through a basket of support measures, including providing land and premises at nominal premium and rent, interest-free start-up loans, the \$3.52 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund, student finance and quality assurance subsidies.

As at the end of 2015, around \$7.3 billion of start-up loans to post-secondary institutions out of the total \$9 billion commitment had been approved. In the 2014-15 academic year, \$71.76 million in scholarships were awarded under the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund to 4,139 recipients and grants totalling more than \$41 million were approved for nine projects under the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme.

The number of publicly funded senior year undergraduate places available at UGC-funded institutions for those with sub-degree qualifications to enter in the third year will be increased by 1,000 over the period from 2015-16 to 2018-19. This will offer more opportunities for such

students to obtain publicly funded degree education and foster a flexible multiple-entry post-secondary education framework.

On a pilot basis starting from the 2015-16 academic year, the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors will subsidise around 1,000 students per year to pursue designated full-time locally accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines.

Governance of Post-secondary Institutions

All UGC-funded institutions, the Open University and the HKAPA are statutory bodies governed by their own ordinances. Approved post-secondary colleges are governed by the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance. Each post-secondary institution has its own structure of governance, normally including a governing body, called the council or board of governors, and a body to regulate academic affairs, called the senate or the academic board. As at December 2015, there were nine approved post-secondary colleges registered under the ordinance: Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Centennial College, Chu Hai College of Higher Education, Gratia Christian College, Hang Seng Management College, Hong Kong College of Technology Institute of Higher Education, Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education, Shue Yan University and Tung Wah College.

Vocational and Adult Education

The Vocational Training Council

The VTC is a statutory body established to provide a comprehensive system of vocational education and training for school leavers and adult learners. It provided some 250,000 full-time and part-time places during the 2014-15 academic year.

The VTC provides a range of quality-assured, internationally recognised full-time and part-time courses from post-secondary 3 up to degree level, covering a wide range of study areas including applied science, design, engineering, hospitality, child education and community services, business and information technology. Courses are offered through the VTC's 13 member institutions, such as Hong Kong Design Institute, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, Institute of Professional Education and Knowledge, International Culinary Institute, Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong and Youth College. The VTC also administers the apprenticeship scheme and provides trade testing and certification.

In the 2014-15 academic year, the VTC implemented the Pilot Training and Support Scheme to attract and retain talent for industries with a keen demand for labour, by integrating structured apprenticeships with clear career progression pathways. It is expected to benefit 2,000 students. Starting from the 2014-15 academic year, the VTC has recurrent funding to provide industrial attachment opportunities for about 9,000 students mainly studying higher diploma programmes and certain Diploma of Vocational Education programmes every year.

Yi Jin Diploma

The Yi Jin Diploma Programme provides an alternative channel for Secondary 6 school leavers and adult learners to earn a formal qualification for employment and continuing education

purposes. The programme is run by seven self-financing institutions and may be taken either full-time or part-time. In 2015-16, more than 4,200 students enrolled in the programme.

Evening Secondary Courses

In the 2015-16 school year, around 1,300 adult students enrolled in evening secondary courses at designated centres operated by Approved Course Providers under the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses.

Student Achievements

Hong Kong students excelled in international competitions in 2015. Hong Kong teams won a total of four gold, 12 silver and three bronze medals in the International Mathematical Olympiad, the International Physics Olympiad, the International Olympiad in Informatics and International Junior Science Olympiad.

Hong Kong students ranked second in both reading and scientific literacy and third in mathematical literacy in the latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted in 2012. PISA is an international survey co-ordinated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which measures the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of 15-year-old students every three years. The 2012 survey assessed students in 65 economies.

In music, Hong Kong students won one gold prize, four silver prizes and one bronze prize in the 16th International Chopin Piano Competition in Asia, one third prize in the 64th ARD International Music Competition in Munich, and two second prizes in the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in 2015.

In visual arts, Hong Kong students won two Hong Kong Grand Prizes in the International Students' Visual Arts Contest-cum-Exhibition of Hong Kong, the Best Individual in the International On-site Painting Competition of the 'Small Monmartre of Bitola', the Winner in the Nautilus Patch Design Contest, as well as one special award and the youngest winner award in the 7th Nakamura Keith Haring Collection International Children's Drawing Contest.

In sports, Hong Kong students won two gold and two silver medals in the Italian Junior and Cadet Open-Table Tennis; third runner-up in Girls Athletics in the Asian School Championships, and came first in a variety of sports events in the Schools Interport Competitions. Hong Kong young athletes won the Asia Rugby U20 Sevens Series; three silver and four bronze medals in the Asian Junior Squash Individual Championship 2015; one gold, two silver and two bronze medals in the U-23 Asian Fencing Championships 2015; one gold, one silver and two bronze medals in the 21st Asian Junior Rowing Championships 2015; and 29 gold, 25 silver and 24 bronze medals in the Asian Rope Skipping Championships 2015.

Qualifications and Quality Assurance

Qualifications Framework

The Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF), established under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance, provides a transparent and accessible platform to promote lifelong learning and help enhance the competitiveness of the workforce. It covers academic, vocational and continuing education qualifications. The QF is underpinned by a robust quality assurance mechanism. All qualifications recognised under the QF are locally accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) (established under the HKCAAVQ Ordinance) or by self-accrediting institutions in Hong Kong. The government maintains a Qualifications Register, a web-based database that lists the qualifications and their associated learning programmes recognised under the QF.

As at December 2015, the government has assisted 21 industries¹ in setting up Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) under the QF covering about 53 per cent of Hong Kong's total labour force. A major task of each ITAC, which comprises key stakeholders from the industry concerned, is to draw up Specification of Competency Standards (SCS) for its sector, setting out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in the sector's different functional areas, and enabling course providers to design training programmes to meet the sector's needs. SCSs provide useful guides for the development of in-house training and human resources management, such as staff recruitment and performance assessment.

The government has also developed a Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism under the QF to enable practitioners to obtain formal recognition for the knowledge, skills and experience they have acquired in the workplace, and facilitate further learning without the need to start from scratch. In July 2014, the government introduced a policy and principles for credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) under the QF to further support learning pathways for learners. The policy and principles for CAT assists education and training providers in developing or refining their CAT systems. It also facilitates the recognition of a learner's assessed learning outcome and minimises the need for any repetition of learning already achieved.

To support the QF's sustainable development, the government has established the QF Fund, a \$1 billion endowment fund to provide a steady source of income for QF-related initiatives.

The government has also conducted a Comparability Study of the HKQF and European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to enhance collaboration between HKQF and EQF. The report was presented to the EQF Advisory Group of the European Commission in December 2015.

Quality Assurance of Post-secondary Education

There are three quality assurance bodies in Hong Kong to monitor the quality of the post-secondary education sector. The HKCAAVQ is a statutory body responsible for the quality

¹ Printing and Publishing; Watch and Clock; Catering; Beauty and Hairdressing; Property Management; Electrical and Mechanical Services; Jewellery; Information and Communications Technology; Automotive; Logistics; Banking; Import and Export; Testing, Inspection and Certification; Retail; Insurance; Manufacturing Technology (Tooling, Metals and Plastics); Elderly Care Services; Security Services; Human Resources Management; and Fashion.

assurance of all operators and programmes except the UGC-funded institutions which enjoy self-accrediting status. The Quality Assurance Council (QAC), a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under the aegis of the UGC, conducts quality audits of the UGC-funded institutions and programmes offered at degree level and above, however funded. The Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC), established by the Heads of Universities Committees, provides peer review of the quality assurance processes of self-financing sub-degree programmes offered by the UGC-funded institutions.

The government collaborates with the HKCAAVQ, JQRC and QAC through the Liaison Committee on Quality Assurance to identify ways to enhance and rationalise the quality assurance required for the self-financing post-secondary regime, so as to provide a stronger platform for the sector's continuous development. The government will implement periodic external quality audits on sub-degree operations of UGC-funded institutions.

Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Reg) Ordinance

The Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance regulates non-local courses conducted in Hong Kong through a system of registration to ensure the standard of the courses and qualifications are comparable to those of their home countries. It protects Hong Kong consumers by guarding against the marketing of sub-standard non-local courses. As at the end of September 2015, 1,191 non-local courses were registered or exempted from registration under the ordinance.

Support Provided to Schools and Students

Quality Education Fund

Up to the end of August 2015, the Quality Education Fund had approved around \$4.196 billion for some 8,896 projects to promote high-quality education and schemes that recognise excellence of teachers.

Life Planning Education

From the 2014-15 school year, an annual Career and Life Planning grant of around \$500,000 is disbursed to all public-sector and DSS schools providing senior secondary education to implement life planning education to better prepare students for the transition from school to post-secondary/vocational education or the workplace and to make the best of the opportunities ahead.

The Business-School Partnership Programme (BSPP) provides students with opportunities to explore different trades and careers. In the 2014-15 school year, more than 120 business organisations collaborated with EDB in organising over 750 BSPP activities benefiting some 250,000 students. EDB will continue to encourage closer collaboration between schools and business establishments, vocational and professional education and training providers and community organisations to arrange more opportunities for secondary school students to acquire first-hand experience about different careers.

Support Programmes for Needy Students

In the 2015-16 school year, 889 schools and 175 non-governmental organisations received subsidies under the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes for organising activities to help about 190,000 eligible needy students improve their learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experience outside the classroom and raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund, established by the bureau and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, allocated \$78.79 million (including the Award Scheme allocation of \$20.24 million) to 939 participating schools during 2014-15, providing financial aid to over 200,000 students in need from Primary 1 to Secondary 6 to participate in activities organised or recognised by schools for students' whole-person development.

Management of Schools

School education services are regulated by the Education Ordinance. Schools must comply with its provisions, including its subsidiary legislation relating to areas such as registration of schools, teachers and managers, health and safety requirements, fees and charges, and teacher qualifications.

School-based Management

Aided schools are devolved with considerable autonomy and funding flexibility to implement school-based management. In return, they have to be more transparent and accountable in their operation and include all key stakeholders in their governance structure, including school sponsoring body representatives, the principal and elected teacher, parent and alumni representatives and independent members.

School Development and Accountability

The School Development and Accountability Framework seeks to foster sustained school development through school self-evaluation, complemented by the external school review to give schools the benefit of feedback and suggestions for improvement from reviewers with perspectives across schools.

Professional Development at Schools

Teachers' Professional Development

The Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals advises the bureau on policies relating to the professional development of the teaching profession at different career stages and provides a platform for professional sharing, collaboration and networking.

The Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence (CEATE), organised by the bureau, aims to recognise accomplished teachers and foster a culture of excellence in the teaching profession. In the 2014-15 school year, 51 teachers received CEATE awards or certificates of merit.

The Hong Kong Teachers' Centre organises conferences, seminars, workshops and experience-sharing sessions to promote continuing professional development for teachers. Physical and mental health activities are also arranged to help teachers maintain work-life balance.

The Council on Professional Conduct in Education (CPC), a non-statutory body, advises the government on measures to promote professional conduct in education and on alleged misconduct cases involving educators that are lodged with the CPC.

Principals' Professional Development

To help principals enhance their leadership knowledge and skills, there are different professional development requirements for aspiring principals, newly appointed principals and serving principals to address their developmental needs at different career stages. Some 1,300 aspiring principals have attained the Certification for Principalship and about half of them have become principals.

School-based Support Services

School-based support services aim to foster leadership at schools, in particular at the middle managers' level, widen the dissemination of informed practices to improve learning, teaching and assessment strategies in the classroom, and support professional learning among teachers. In the 2014-15 school year, the bureau provided school-based support services, including those financed by the Education Development Fund, to 309 secondary schools, 372 primary schools, 42 special schools and 178 kindergartens/kindergarten-cum-child care centres.

The Regional Education Offices also offer school-based support services to schools in response to the needs of students, teachers, schools and other stakeholders they serve.

Student Finance

To ensure no student is denied access to education because of a lack of means, the Student Finance Office (SFO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency provides means-tested and non-means-tested financial assistance to students at various study levels. The SFO also administers a number of scholarship schemes.

Financial Assistance for Pre-primary Education

Eligible children may enjoy non-means-tested fee subsidies under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, and means-tested fee remission under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme. In the 2014-15 school year, fee subsidies and remission totalling \$2.7 billion and \$502 million were granted to about 133,300 and 37,800 students respectively.

Financial Assistance for Primary and Secondary Education

At the primary and secondary levels, means-tested assistance covers the cost of textbooks, travel subsidies, subsidies for internet access charges and examination fee remission. In the 2014-15 school year, \$815 million was disbursed to around 226,000 students to cover the costs of essential textbooks and miscellaneous school-related expenses, \$326 million to more than 152,400 students as travel subsidies, \$161 million to around 154,500 families to subsidise internet access by students at home, and \$42 million in examination fee remission for some

20,900 students sitting public examinations. In addition, the government disbursed school-based and district-based grants to support needy students' whole-person development.

Financial Assistance for Post-secondary Education

Means-tested grants and low-interest loans are offered to eligible full-time students pursuing eligible courses at UGC-funded or publicly funded institutions. In the 2014-15 academic year, some 26,800 students received \$1,025 million of grants and \$239 million of loans. Eligible students pursuing locally accredited, self-financing full-time post-secondary programmes are also provided with means-tested grants and low-interest loans. In the 2014-15 academic year, \$1,106 million of grants and \$200 million of loans were provided to around 23,000 students.

Non-means-tested loans operating on a no-gain-no-loss and full-cost-recovery basis are available to students pursuing eligible publicly funded or self-financing post-secondary programmes, and eligible professional or continuing education courses. In the 2014-15 academic year, more than 29,300 people received loans amounting to \$1,460 million.

Travel subsidies totalling \$150 million were provided to about 48,800 students of post-secondary institutions.

Yi Jin Diploma and Evening Secondary Courses Tuition Fee Reimbursement

Eligible Yi Jin Diploma students and those on designated evening secondary education courses may receive reimbursement of 30 per cent of the tuition fee, with an additional amount for those who pass a means test.

Grants for Programmes Below Sub-degree Level

Students who are eligible to receive a full or half means-tested grant under SFO and are pursuing eligible programmes below sub-degree level will be entitled to reimbursement of all or half of the tuition fee respectively. For programmes of one year or longer, they may also receive all or half of the flat-rate academic expenses grant.

Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme

The Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme provides a means-tested subsidy of up to \$15,000 per year to needy students to pursue undergraduate studies under the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions. In 2014-15, over \$3 million was granted in subsidies to 263 students. For 2015-16, 336 new applications were received. Of those, subsidies were granted to 216 students as at December 2015.

Scholarships

Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme

In November 2014, the government launched the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme (HKSES) to support local students pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate studies outside Hong Kong. All awardees will receive a non-means-tested scholarship to cover their tuition fees, subject to a ceiling of \$250,000 per annum. Financially less well-off students may also apply for the means-tested bursary, subject to a ceiling of \$200,000 per annum. The

scheme will benefit three cohorts of students, with up to 100 students per cohort, starting from the 2015-16 academic year. As at December 2015, 92 students had been offered scholarships, and scholarships and bursaries totalled \$17.3 million.

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Scholarship Fund and Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund

The \$2.27 billion HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund awards scholarships on the basis of merit to outstanding local and non-local students studying in full-time publicly funded programmes at sub-degree and degree level or above in the eight UGC-funded institutions, the Academy for Performing Arts and the VTC. In the self-financing post-secondary education sector, a \$3.52 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund provides scholarships and awards to outstanding students pursuing full-time locally accredited self-financing sub-degree or undergraduate programmes, and supports worthwhile initiatives and schemes to enhance self-financing post-secondary education.

In the 2014-15 academic year, 9,007 scholarships and awards were distributed by the two funds.

Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers

The government's Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers aims to attract persons proficient in English to pursue local bachelor degree programmes and/or teacher training programmes majoring in English or a relevant subject which will qualify them to become English teachers on graduation.

Community Participation in Education

Home-School Co-operation

The Committee on Home-School Co-operation encourages the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). As at 2015, about 1,400 PTAs had been established. The bureau funded about 3,200 school-based and district-based home-school co-operation activities in the 2014-15 school year.

Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education

The committee advises the government on civic education, collaborates with the government and other parties in arranging civic education activities, and sponsors community organisations to organise projects to promote civic education outside school. In 2015, the committee concentrated on encouraging a positive attitude towards life, fostering family harmony to cultivate an integrated and harmonious society, instilling core civic values, and promoting understanding of the Basic Law and the Mainland.

The committee promoted the core civic values of 'Respect and Inclusiveness', 'Responsibility', 'Love' and 'Upholding the Rule of Law' to encourage mutual respect in the community for those from different cultural backgrounds and with different points of view. To mark the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of the Basic Law, the committee also organised seminars and a quiz competition to promote the Basic Law, and encouraged community groups and district

councils to hold activities relating to the theme. Other promotional initiatives included the annual Civic Education Exhibition and the production of civic education publications.

The Civic Education Resource Centre at the Youth Square comprises a 'Resource Corner' with reference materials on civic education and youth development, a 'Civic Square' and a 'Gallery'. Equipped with audio/visual facilities, the Civic Square is used for training courses, seminars, sharing sessions and youth activities and film shows about civic education. The Gallery's videos and interactive games help visitors experience and explore different aspects of civic education. Guided tours are provided and periodic exhibitions are held to promote core civic values.

Commission on Youth

The commission's main tasks include advising the government on youth matters, initiating studies on youth, promoting youth development, enhancing communication between young people and the government, and providing young people with exchange opportunities on the Mainland and overseas, and internship opportunities on the Mainland.

To enhance communication, the commission invites senior government officials, representatives from advisory bodies or renowned speakers to attend 'Youth Exchange Sessions' so that they can communicate directly with young people and gather their views on relevant topics. The commission's 'Youth Summit', held every two years, provides a platform for principal officials to exchange views with young participants.

To promote youth development, in 2015 the commission approved sponsorship under the Large-scale Youth Programme Funding Scheme for 12 large-scale youth programmes run by qualified organisations in Hong Kong.

In 2015, the commission sponsored 253 exchange tours to the Mainland run by community organisations to enhance young people's awareness and understanding of China, strengthen their sense of national identity and foster exchanges with Mainland people. The commission also sponsored 84 projects run by community organisations providing young people with internship opportunities on the Mainland for better understanding of the Mainland employment market, work culture and development opportunities. Youth delegates visited Ireland, Japan, Poland, Russia and Singapore under the International Youth Exchange Programme to broaden their outlook and world perspective. The commission also hosted young people from Ireland, Japan, Singapore and Russia on reciprocal visits to Hong Kong.

In collaboration with 18 District Youth Programme Committees, the commission's Youth Programme Co-ordinating Committee provides a wide range of cultural, arts, sports and general development activities for children and young people aged between six and 29. Citywide youth development activities co-ordinated and organised by the co-ordinating committee include the Outstanding Youth Commendation Scheme and the Outstanding Youth Activity Commendation Scheme. The Home Affairs Department also co-ordinates youth development activities at the district level. In addition, about 4,400 activities were organised in the summer of 2015 with government funding and sponsorship from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

In 2015, the commission released a report on the “Youth Competitiveness Indicator System in Hong Kong” study, which aimed to clarify the concept of youth competitiveness, develop approaches to define the concept and propose assessment standards and coverage.

Children’s Rights

The Children’s Rights Forum is a platform for children’s organisations, children and the government to exchange views on matters that concern children. This platform helps the Family Council assess the impact of government policies on the family by relaying to the council children’s views on government initiatives expressed at the forum. To enhance understanding of children’s rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children’s Rights Education Funding Scheme has supported non-governmental bodies to implement around 270 projects since its establishment in 2006.

Promotion of Racial Equality and Harmony

Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony

The committee advises the government on the promotion of racial harmony and equality, including the provision of support services for ethnic minorities, and on proposals for race-related public education and publicity. Secretariat support is provided by the Home Affairs Department’s Race Relations Unit.

Support Services for Ethnic Minorities

The department commissions non-governmental organisations to run six support service centres and two sub-centres for ethnic minorities, offering tailor-made classes, counselling and integration programmes. The youth units in all these centres provide dedicated activities for ethnic minority youths. One centre also provides free language interpretation on the telephone to assist ethnic minorities in the use of public services. The department sponsors two community support teams to offer special services for ethnic minority groups through members of their own communities.

In addition, the department funds radio programmes and publishes service guidebooks in a number of ethnic minority languages. Other services include District-based Integration Programmes to help ethnic minorities better understand Hong Kong and encourage them to take part in community activities; the Ambassador Scheme, which introduces public services to ethnic minorities and makes referrals where necessary; and the Youth Ambassador Scheme to proactively reach out to ethnic minority youths who are in need of services. The department also recruits people who are familiar with ethnic minority cultures and languages to promote racial harmony in the community.

Websites

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau: www.cmab.gov.hk

Education Bureau: www.edb.gov.hk

Home Affairs Bureau: www.hab.gov.hk

Home Affairs Department: www.had.gov.hk

Race Relations Unit: www.had.gov.hk/rru/