

## Chapter 8

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# Education

*In an increasingly competitive and connected world, education is of vital importance. Reflecting that, total government expenditure on education has increased from \$51.9 billion in 2006-07 to \$84 billion in 2016-17 estimates, or 17.3 per cent of total government spending.*

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. The government provides 12 years' free primary and secondary education to all students in public-sector schools, which form the majority in the school system. These consist of government schools operated directly by the government and aided schools that are generally run by religious or charitable organisations, fully subvented by the government and managed by their own incorporated management committee or school management committee. In addition, there are Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools, which can charge school fees, receive government subvention based on enrolment and enjoy greater flexibility, and self-financed private schools providing alternatives to parents.

Hong Kong's 52 international schools, including 15 operated by the English Schools Foundation, provide about 42,200 places as of September 2016, catering mainly to the demand of overseas families living in Hong Kong for work and 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, Singapore, South Korea and the United States, as well as the International Baccalaureate programme.

Both publicly funded and self-financing post-secondary programmes are available at sub-degree, undergraduate and higher levels. The publicly funded programmes are provided by the eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and the Vocational Training Council (VTC). Diverse self-financing post-secondary programmes 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 2016-17 financial year is \$84 billion, making up 17.3 per cent of total government expenditure. Of this, \$74.7 billion is recurrent expenditure on education, comprising 21.5 per cent of total recurrent government expenditure.

### **Education Commission**

The Education Commission advises the government on education objectives and policies and coordinates 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 are 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 UGC 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. The government runs a Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) to provide a non-means-tested direct fee subsidy for children aged two years and eight months above with the right of abode in Hong Kong attending eligible local non-profit-making kindergartens. The PEVS ensures quality education through a self-evaluation system supported by an external review. In 2016-17, about 184,400 children were enrolled in 1,014 kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres. About 76 per cent of students and 97 per cent of local non-profit-making kindergartens benefited from the scheme. A means-tested fee remission scheme is also available to low-income families to ensure no child is deprived of kindergarten education because of lack of means.

All kindergartens are required to employ qualified kindergarten teachers. Kindergartens under the PEVS must employ teachers with a Certificate in Early Childhood Education on a teacher to student ratio of 1:15. All newly appointed principals must have a bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education.

Starting from 2017-18, the government will implement a free quality kindergarten education policy and provide kindergartens with direct subsidy. The policy objectives are to provide quality and highly affordable kindergarten education, and to enhance students' access to different services that suit their specific needs.

## Primary Education

Public-sector primary schools offer six years' free education. A child starts primary education at about age six. In September 2016, a total of 282,482 children were enrolled in 454 public-sector primary schools, comprising 34 government schools and 420 aided schools. In addition, 21 DSS primary schools offered 16,125 places and 57 private primary schools offered 37,331 places.

Admissions to Primary 1 in public-sector schools are administered through the centralised Primary One Admission System, divided into two stages: Discretionary Places Admission and Central Allocation. Each school will first earmark about 50 per cent of its Primary 1 places as discretionary places, and parents may apply to only one government or aided school within or outside the school catchment area, or 'school net', where they live. The remaining 50 per cent of Primary 1 places are for central allocation. Of these, 10 per cent are meant for parents to make up to three Unrestricted School Choices from any school net for their child, while 90 per cent are for parents to make Restricted School Choices in their school net in order of preference.

## Secondary Education

Public-sector secondary schools also provide six years' free education. In September 2016, a total of 268,609 students were enrolled in 393 public-sector secondary schools, comprising 360 aided schools, 31 government schools and two caput schools that are subsidised according to the number of students admitted. There were also 61 DSS secondary schools offering 56,606 places and 21 private secondary schools offering 7,911 places.

All students undergo 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 places are allocated through the Secondary School Places Allocation System, divided into two stages: Discretionary Places and Central Allocation. Schools participating in the system 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 participating schools in any districts. The schools' remaining places, after deducting discretionary and repeater places, are used for central allocation, of which 10 per cent are meant for parents to make not more than three Unrestricted School Choices from any school net, while 90 per cent are for parents to make a maximum of 30 Restricted School Choices from the school net to which their child belongs.

Students completing junior secondary education 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 is flexible, coherent and diversified. It aims to cater for varied interests, needs, aptitudes and abilities. Students take four core subjects and acquire Other Learning Experiences. They can also 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 2016-18 cohort, 36 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 study at Secondary 6, students 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 240 tertiary institutions worldwide, including renowned universities Oxford and Yale, recognise the qualification for admission purposes, and more are being added.

In 2015, about 88 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 HKDSE Examination results and exempt them from taking the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities on the Mainland. More than 15,400 Hong Kong students applied under the scheme from the 2012-13 to 2016-17 academic years, and more than 6,400 were admitted. In 2017-18, the number of participating institutions will increase from 84 to 90, located in 15 Mainland provinces and municipalities and one autonomous region.

### **Chinese History Education**

Chinese history is an integral part of the curriculum for all primary and secondary schools. Learning content on the Chinese nation, history and Chinese culture is included in the General Studies subject at the primary level, while at the junior secondary level, all schools must devote about two periods per week to Chinese history. At the senior secondary level, Chinese History is an elective subject. To enhance students' interest in learning the subject, the Ad Hoc Committee under the Curriculum Development Council is now reviewing and revising the Junior Secondary Chinese History subject curriculum. It is expected that the review and revision work will be completed by the third quarter of 2017.

### **Basic Law Education**

The Basic Law is a constitutional document for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). It enshrines within a legal document the important concepts of 'one country, two systems', 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy. It also prescribes the various systems to be practised in the HKSAR. The Basic Law is intimately related to our daily lives.

To support the learning and teaching of the Basic Law, the government provides a range of support measures for schools, including a territory-wide inter-school Basic Law competition, learning and teaching resources, professional development programmes for principals and teachers, and Mainland exchange programmes.

Elements of the Basic Law have long been incorporated into the curricula and learning activities of primary and secondary schools. These include General Studies at the primary level, Life and Society at the junior secondary level, Liberal Studies at the senior secondary level, and Chinese History and History at both junior and senior secondary levels.

### **Language Education**

The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research advises the government on language education issues and on the use of the Language Fund as well as the policy and procedures governing its operation. The fund supports initiatives to improve proficiency in Chinese and English, including Putonghua.

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 learning. 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 increase junior secondary students' opportunities for exposure to, and use of, English, taking into account their 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 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 Scheme**

There are more than 400 Native English-speaking Teachers (NETs) working in secondary schools and over 450 NETs in primary schools. They collaborate with local English teachers to enhance teaching and make English learning experiences more authentic and engaging for students. They help create a rich English language environment and promote the use of innovative teaching strategies. The scheme has brought about positive changes in classroom practice and students have shown a more positive attitude towards learning English.

### **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. The Chinese Language

Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework, implemented since 2014-15 in primary and secondary schools, helps NCS students overcome the difficulties of learning Chinese as a second language and to switch to mainstream Chinese Language classes. Schools receive enhanced funding to provide intensive Chinese language teaching and create an inclusive learning environment. Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) courses pegged at the Qualifications Framework levels 1 to 3 have also been provided since 2014-15 to NCS senior secondary students. Other complementary measures include enhancing teachers' capabilities in teaching Chinese as a second language and the provision of learning and teaching resources packages.

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

UGC-funded universities accept various Chinese language qualifications under specified circumstances 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, for application under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System. Similar arrangements are available for admission to sub-degree programmes. NCS students taking these Chinese language examinations pay subsidised fees which are the same as the examination fee of the HKDSE Chinese Language examination. Those with financial needs may further receive half or full remission of the subsidised examination fee.

The government collaborates with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to hold district-based programmes, supported by the Language Fund, for NCS children aged three to nine to motivate them to learn Chinese through fun activities. For NCS school leavers, 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. These courses started in early 2016.

## Special Education

Students with more severe or multiple disabilities are placed in special schools to receive intensive support, subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and with parents' consent. Others with special educational needs (SEN) may attend ordinary schools. As at September 2016, there were 60 aided special schools, 21 of which had boarding facilities, providing about 8,850 school places and 1,100 boarding places.

In September 2016, some 42,890 students with SEN were studying in public-sector ordinary primary and secondary schools.

The government provides these schools with additional resources, professional support and teacher training to help them cater for their students with SEN. Professional staff members from the bureau visit these schools regularly to advise on school policies and support measures in implementing Integrated Education. Educational psychologists and school-based speech therapists conduct case assessment, and provide consultation and support services for schools.

Starting from September 2016, the government has extended its School-based Educational Psychology Service to cover all public-sector primary and secondary schools and enhanced the service by progressively improving the ratio of educational psychologists to schools to 1:4 for schools with a large number of students with SEN. By the end of the 2015-16 school year, about 42 per cent and about 24 per cent of teachers in public-sector primary and secondary schools respectively had completed structured training programmes to strengthen their capacity to cater for students with SEN. With effect from the 2015-16 school year, the grant rates and the ceiling of the Learning Support Grant for schools are adjusted annually according to changes in the Composite Consumer Price Index. The ceiling of the grant is about \$1.58 million in 2016-17.

The Endeavour Merit Award and Endeavour Scholarship recognise excellence in post-secondary students with SEN at publicly funded and self-financing institutions respectively.

Gifted students receive government help to develop their capabilities, including gifted development programmes that the bureau supports schools in designing and implementing. Learning and teaching resource packs are disseminated to schools and uploaded to the web. Professional development programmes and teachers' networks equip teachers with knowledge and skills in gifted education. A school network piloted at the primary level promotes professional exchange and experience sharing among teachers in different schools. 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 take part in international competitions.

The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education provides gifted students with courses, competitions, conferences, mentoring and online learning. It also offers professional development programmes to teachers through thematic courses, lectures and outreach activities. Services for parents of gifted children include the Parent Education Programme, outreach, assessment and consultation.

### **Information Technology in Education**

The government launched the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education (ITE4) in August 2015, building on past ITE strategies and other e-learning initiatives. This included the phased provision of wireless network services for all public-sector schools to facilitate the use of mobile computing devices in e-learning and a comprehensive range of other support measures.

In 2016, all 34 sets of e-textbooks covering subjects at primary and junior secondary levels developed under the e-Textbook Market Development Scheme were included on the Recommended e-Textbook List for school use.

### **Post-secondary Education**

Hong Kong has 20 local degree-awarding post-secondary education institutions, eight of which are funded by the public through the UGC. The other 12 are the publicly funded 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 2016-17, the UGC-funded universities and the HKAPA together provided around 15,170 publicly funded, first-year-first-degree intake places, while self-financing undergraduate programmes offered about 10,340 places. The UGC-funded universities and the self-financing, degree-awarding institutions also provided around 4,600 senior-year undergraduate places and 11,500 top-up degree places respectively for sub-degree graduates and students with other qualifications. At the sub-degree level, around 23,200 and 11,000 intake places were available respectively for self-financing and publicly funded sub-degree programmes.

### ***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 2016, around \$7.3 billion of start-up loans to post-secondary institutions out of a total \$9 billion commitment had been approved. In the 2015-16 academic year, \$76.8 million in scholarships were awarded under the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund to 4,563 recipients and grants totalling more than \$47 million were approved for 12 projects under the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme.

The number of publicly funded undergraduate places available at UGC-funded universities for sub-degree graduates to enter in the third year is being increased by 1,000 between 2015-16 and 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 2015-16, the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors subsidises 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 universities, 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 academic board. As at December 2016, nine approved post-secondary colleges were registered under the ordinance: the 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 Professional Education and Training and Adult Education**

### ***Vocational Training Council***

The VTC is a statutory body established to provide a comprehensive system of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) for school leavers and adult learners. It provided some 250,000 full-time and part-time places during 2015-16.

Quality-assured, internationally recognised full-time and part-time courses are available from post-secondary 3 up to degree level, covering applied science, design, engineering, hospitality, child education and community services, business, information technology and other study areas. The courses are offered through the VTC's 13 member institutions, such as the 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 an apprenticeship scheme and provides trade testing and certification.

Since 2014-15, the VTC has implemented a Pilot Training and Support Scheme with the government's funding support 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 4,000 students across four cohorts. Starting from the same academic year, the VTC has received recurrent funding to provide industrial attachment opportunities for about 9,000 students every year, mainly studying higher diploma programmes and certain Diploma of Vocational Education programmes.

### ***Diploma Yi Jin Programme***

The Diploma Yi Jin Programme provides an alternative channel for Secondary 6 school leavers and adult learners to earn a formal qualification for employment and continuing education purposes. It is run by seven self-financing institutions and may be taken either full-time or part-time. The 2016-17 enrolment exceeded 4,000 students.

### ***Evening Secondary Courses***

In 2016-17, around 1,100 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 2016. Hong Kong teams won a total of five gold, 10 silver and six bronze medals in the International Mathematical Olympiad, International Physics Olympiad, International Olympiad in Informatics and International Junior Science Olympiad.

Hong Kong students ranked second in reading and mathematical literacy, and ninth in scientific literacy in the latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted in 2015. PISA is an international survey coordinated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which measures the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of 15-year-olds every three years. The 2015 survey assessed students in 72 economies.

In music, Hong Kong students won The Plateau A Award & The Presenter's Award at the International Barbershop Youth Chorus Festival, four first prizes and two second prizes in the 5th China National Arts Showcase for Primary and Secondary Students, three Champion prizes in the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, one Champion prize and one Special Conductor Prize in the Singapore International Choral Festival, one Grand Prix in the International Youth Music Festival, two Gold Diplomas in the Orientale Concentus IX, one Grand Champion prize in the 13th China International Chorus Festival, and one Gold Medal in the 2nd Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong National Youth Music Competition in Guzhen.

In visual arts, Hong Kong students won four Hong Kong Grand Prizes in the International Students' Visual Arts Contest-cum-Exhibition of Hong Kong, a Best Individual prize in the Small Monmartre of Bitola 2016, two Gold Prizes in the World Children's Picture Contest, as well as a number of 1st Class Honours prizes in the International Year of Light and Light-Based Technologies Art and Design Competition.

In sports, Hong Kong students won the first runner-up prize in the Blackpool British Open Ballroom Formation Dancing Championship 2015; one gold, three silver and one bronze medals in the 23rd Asian Junior Cycling Championship; two golds, two silvers and one bronze in the Japan Junior Open Squash Championships 2016; overall champion prize in the 2nd Asian School Rugby Sevens Championships, and overall first runner-up prize with 10 golds, nine silvers and 11 bronzes in the 5th Asian Schools Swimming Championships. Young athletes won the overall champion prize with 27 golds, 27 silvers and 26 bronzes in the World Rope Skipping Championships cum Sweden Open Tournament; first place in the 2016 World Junior Tennis – Asia/Oceania Final Qualifying; two golds, one silver and one bronze in the 2016 Sydney International Rowing Regatta; and four golds and two silvers in the China National Acrobatic Gymnastics 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 enhance workforce competitiveness. It covers academic, VPET and continuing education qualifications. The QF is underpinned by a robust quality assurance mechanism. All qualifications recognised under the framework 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 framework.

As at October 2016, the government has helped 22 industries<sup>1</sup> set up Industry Training Advisory Committees under the QF, covering about 53 per cent of the labour force. A major task of each

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<sup>1</sup> Printing and Publishing; Watch and Clock; Catering; Hairdressing; Property Management; Electrical and Mechanical Services; Jewellery; Information and Communications Technology; Automotive; Beauty; 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; Fashion and Arboriculture and Horticulture.

committee, which comprises key stakeholders from the industry concerned, is to draw up Specification of Competency Standards 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. These standards 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 acquire in the workplace, and to facilitate further learning without the need to start from scratch. A government policy and principles for credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) under the framework are in place to further support learning pathways for learners. The policy and principles help education and training providers develop and refine their CAT systems. They also facilitate the recognition of a learner's assessed learning outcome and minimise the need to repeat any learning already achieved.

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

In late 2015, the government completed a Comparability Study of the HKQF and European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to enhance collaboration between the two frameworks. The report was presented to the EQF Advisory Group of the European Commission in December 2015. Three other referencing projects, with the New Zealand, Scottish and Irish QFs, are expected to end in 2017.

### **Quality Assurance of Post-secondary Education**

Two quality assurance bodies monitor the quality of the post-secondary education sector. The HKCAAVQ is a statutory body responsible for the quality assurance of all operators and programmes except the UGC-funded universities, 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 universities with a view to assuring the quality of all programmes at the levels of sub-degree, first degree and above (however funded) offered in the universities is sustained and improved, and is at an internationally competitive level.

The government works with the HKCAAVQ and the 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.

### **Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance**

This 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 non-local courses which do not fulfill the registration criteria. As at the end of September 2016, 1,149 non-local courses were registered or exempted from registration under the ordinance.

## **More Funding Resources**

### ***Quality Education Fund***

Up to the end of August 2016, the Quality Education Fund had approved about \$4.27 billion for 9,048 projects to promote high-quality education and schemes that recognise teaching excellence.

### ***Life Planning Education***

A recurrent Career and Life Planning Grant of about \$500,000 is disbursed to public-sector and DSS schools providing senior secondary education from the 2014-15 school year to implement life planning education to better prepare students for the transition from school to post-secondary education, including VPET, or the workplace and to make the best of opportunities ahead. Schools may turn the grant into regular teaching posts from 2016-17 to further consolidate their experiences with more stable teaching manpower.

The Business-School Partnership Programme provides students with opportunities to explore different trades and careers. In 2015-16, more than 140 business organisations collaborated with the EDB in organising over 950 activities benefiting some 275,000 students. The bureau will continue to encourage closer collaboration between schools and different sectors in the community to arrange more opportunities for secondary students to acquire first-hand experience about different careers.

### ***Support for Needy Students***

In the 2016-17 school year, 896 schools and 173 NGOs 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 experiences 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 \$87.81 million, including an Award Scheme allocation of \$23.62 million, to 937 participating schools in 2015-16. This helped around 200,000 students in need from Primary 1 to Secondary 6 to take part in activities organised or recognised by schools that fostered whole-person development.

### ***Student Finance Office***

To ensure no student is denied access to education because of a lack of means, the Student Finance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency provides means-tested and non-means-tested financial assistance at various study levels. The office 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 school year of 2015-16, fee subsidies and remission totalling \$3.1 billion and \$542 million were granted to about 139,200 and 40,300 students respectively.

### *Financial Assistance for Primary and Secondary Education*

At the primary and secondary levels, means-tested assistance includes textbook assistance, travel subsidies, internet access subsidies and examination fee remission. In the 2015-16 school year, \$813 million was disbursed to about 215,100 students to cover the costs of essential textbooks and miscellaneous school-related expenses, \$331 million to 147,500 students as travel subsidies, \$155 million to around 147,600 families to subsidise internet access by students at home, and \$38 million in examination fee remission for some 18,500 students sitting public examinations. The government also disbursed school-based and district-based grants to support the whole-person development of needy students.

### *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 academic year of 2015-16, about 25,200 students received \$989 million of grants and \$218 million of loans. Eligible students pursuing locally accredited, self-financing full-time post-secondary programmes can also take out means-tested grants and low-interest loans. In the 2015-16 academic year, some \$1,106 million of grants and \$180 million of loans were provided to around 22,100 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 2015-16 academic year, more than 30,600 people received loans amounting to \$1,565 million.

Travel subsidies totalling \$145 million were provided to about 40,100 students of post-secondary institutions.

### *Tuition Fee Reimbursement for Diploma Yi Jin Programme and Evening Secondary Courses*

Eligible students pursuing the Diploma Yi Jin Programme or designated evening secondary education courses may receive reimbursement of 30 per cent of the tuition fee. Those who pass a means test will be reimbursed a higher percentage.

### *Grants for Programmes Below Sub-degree Level*

Students who are eligible to receive a full or half means-tested grant under the Student Finance Office and are pursuing eligible programmes below sub-degree level are 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*

The Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme was expanded in 2016-17 to provide a means-tested subsidy of up to \$15,000 per year to needy local students to pursue undergraduate studies in designated Mainland institutions. In 2015-16, more than \$5.8 million was granted in subsidies to 479 students. For 2016-17, the expanded scheme attracted over 1,900 new applications.

## **Scholarships**

### *Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence*

The Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme supports local students pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate studies outside Hong Kong. It is a non-means-tested scholarship to cover up to \$250,000 of tuition fees per annum. Financially less well-off students may also apply for a means-tested bursary that provides up to \$200,000 per annum. The scheme will benefit three cohorts of students, with up to 100 students per cohort, starting from 2015-16. As at November 2016, scholarships had been offered to 185 students, and scholarships and bursaries totalled \$37.6 million.

### *HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund and Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund*

The \$2.27 billion HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund awards scholarships on a merit basis to outstanding locals and non-locals studying in full-time, publicly funded programmes at sub-degree and degree level or above in the eight UGC-funded universities, the HKAPA 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 2015-16, the two funds distributed 9,584 scholarships and awards.

### *Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers*

The government's Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers aims to attract people 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.

## **Management of Schools**

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

To implement school-based management, aided schools are devolved with considerable autonomy and funding flexibility. 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.

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

## **Professional Development of Educators**

### ***Teachers***

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 2015-16, 41 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 of teachers. It also arranges physical and mental health activities to help teachers maintain work-life balance.

The Council on Professional Conduct in Education, 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 council.

### ***Principals***

Professional development requirements are in place to help aspiring, newly appointed and serving principals enhance their leadership knowledge and address their developmental needs at different career stages. Some 1,400 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, disseminate informed practices more widely to improve learning, teaching and assessment strategies in the classroom, and support professional learning among teachers. In 2015-16, the bureau provided school-based support services, including those financed by the Education Development Fund, to 300 secondary schools, 392 primary schools, 31 special schools, and 181 kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres.

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

## **Community Participation in Education**

### ***Home-School Cooperation***

The Committee on Home-School Cooperation encourages the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations. As at 2016, about 1,400 associations had been established. The bureau funded about 3,300 school-based and district-based home-school cooperation activities in 2015-16.

### ***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 carry out projects to promote civic education outside school. Its tasks include 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. Those core values – ‘Respect and inclusiveness’, ‘Responsibility’ and ‘Love’ – are promoted to encourage mutual respect for people with different cultural backgrounds and points of view.

In 2016, the committee promoted the message ‘Respect the Rule of Law, Embrace Different Voices’. It also rolled out a pilot Funding Scheme for Exchange in Belt and Road Countries to enable in-depth exchange between young Hong Kong people and their counterparts in the Belt and Road countries to foster ‘people-to-people bonds’.

The committee’s Civic Education Resource Centre at the Youth Square houses reference materials on civic education and youth development. It is equipped with audio-visual facilities for use in training courses, seminars, sharing sessions and film shows about civic education, as well as videos and interactive games that help visitors experience and explore different aspects of civic education. The resource centre offers guided tours and periodic thematic exhibitions.

### **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 internship opportunities on the Mainland and exchange opportunities on the Mainland and overseas.

The commission invites senior government officials, representatives from advisory bodies and renowned speakers to attend Youth Exchange Sessions so they can communicate directly with young people. In addition to these sessions is the Youth Summit, held every two years as a platform for principal officials to exchange views with young participants.

In 2016, the commission approved sponsorship under a Large-scale Youth Programme Funding Scheme for 10 youth programmes run by qualified organisations.

The commission also sponsored 265 exchange tours run by community organisations to enhance young people’s awareness and understanding of the Mainland, strengthen their sense of national identity and foster exchanges with Mainland people. It sponsored another 95 internship projects run by community organisations to foster better understanding of the Mainland employment market, work culture and development opportunities. Youth delegates visited Ireland, Japan, Poland, Australia and Singapore under an International Youth Exchange Programme to broaden their outlook and world perspective. The commission also hosted young people from Ireland, Japan, Singapore and Australia on reciprocal visits to Hong Kong.

During the year, the Home Affairs Bureau and the commission set up a Youth Development Fund. The fund offers a matching grant to help NGOs support young people in starting their own businesses with mentorship programmes. It also subsidises innovative youth development projects not covered by existing funding schemes.

The commission works with the 18 District Youth Programme Committees to run cultural, arts, sports and general development activities for six- to 29-year-olds. Citywide projects include the Outstanding Youth Commendation Scheme and Outstanding Youth Activity Commendation Scheme. The Home Affairs Department also coordinates district-level youth activities. About



4,100 activities were organised in the summer of 2016 with government funding and sponsorship from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

The commission provides reference materials for stakeholders to plan and implement youth programmes. In 2016, it published two reports, *Youth in Hong Kong – A Statistical Profile and Trend Analysis of Data from Statistical Profile*, to record the latest situation and development trends of young people. The commission also set up the first database for youth research, comprising more than 800 youth-related research items.

### **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 NGOs to implement about 300 projects since its establishment in 2006.

### **Promotion of Racial Equality and Harmony**

The Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony 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 government commissions non-profit-making organisations to run six support service centres and two sub-centres for ethnic minorities, offering tailor-made classes, counselling and integration programmes. One of the centres also provides free language interpretation on the telephone to help ethnic minorities use public services. Two government-sponsored community support teams offer special services for ethnic minorities through members of their own communities.

In addition, the government 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 join community activities; the Ambassador Scheme, which introduces public services to ethnic minorities and makes referrals where necessary; and the Youth Ambassador Scheme to reach out to ethnic minority youths who are in need of services. A team of publicity officers who are familiar with ethnic minority cultures and languages conducts talks and exhibitions to promote racial harmony in the community.

### **Websites**

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau: [www.cmab.gov.hk](http://www.cmab.gov.hk)

Education Bureau: [www.edb.gov.hk](http://www.edb.gov.hk)

Home Affairs Bureau: [www.hab.gov.hk](http://www.hab.gov.hk)

Home Affairs Department: [www.had.gov.hk](http://www.had.gov.hk)

Race Relations Unit: [www.had.gov.hk/rru/](http://www.had.gov.hk/rru/)