

## Chapter 8

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# Education

*In an increasingly competitive and connected world, education is of vital importance. The importance the government attaches to education is reflected in the increase in total government expenditure on education from \$75 billion in 2008-09 to \$113.7 billion in 2018-19 estimates, or 20 per cent of total government spending.*

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 support of the Permanent Secretary for Education.

Total government expenditure on education in 2018-19 estimates is \$113.7 billion, making up 20 per cent of total government expenditure. Of this, \$84.6 billion is recurrent expenditure on education, comprising 20.8 per cent of total recurrent government expenditure.

The Education Commission advises the Secretary for Education on overall educational objectives and policies and the priorities in implementing its recommendations, coordinates the work of major education-related advisory bodies, oversees the operation of the Quality Education Fund, and submits its reports and recommendations to the Secretary for Education.

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 University Grants Committee (UGC) and the Vocational Training Council (VTC). The non-official members come from both education and non-education fields.

The UGC is a non-statutory body appointed by the Chief Executive. It offers impartial and expert advice to the government on the funding and development of higher education, and provides assurance to the government and the community on the standards and cost-effectiveness of the operations of the eight publicly funded universities, known as UGC-funded universities.

Under the UGC's aegis are the Research Grants Council (RGC), which advises on the research needs of the academic sector and the distribution of research funding, and the Quality Assurance Council, which helps assure the quality of all programmes of the UGC-funded universities.

UGC members are appointed by the Chief Executive in their personal capacity and all are prominent in their fields. They comprise accomplished academics and higher education administrators from outside Hong Kong, and eminent community leaders and academics of high standing locally. The UGC Secretariat, a government department, provides administrative support.

### Education in Hong Kong

The government provides 12 years' free primary and secondary education to all children through 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 committees or school management committees. To provide for more diversity, there are other types of schools, namely 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.

Hong Kong's 55<sup>1</sup> international schools, including 15 operated by the English Schools Foundation, provided about 44,900 places as at September, catering mainly to the demand of non-local 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 Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom 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 UGC-funded universities, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and the VTC. Diverse self-financing post-secondary programmes are available at post-secondary institutions with a choice of study pathways and multiple entry and exit points.

To carry out in-depth reviews on key areas of education, the government set up seven task forces between October 2017 and April 2018 on the professional development of teachers, the school curriculum, promotion of vocational and professional education and training, self-financing post-secondary education, school-based management policy, home-school cooperation and parent education, and research policy and funding.

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<sup>1</sup> One international school is under renovation and hence its operation is suspended temporarily in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years.

## Kindergarten Education

Kindergarten education is not compulsory. Nevertheless, the proportion of children aged three to five attending kindergartens was about 100 per cent in the 2017-18 school year.

Under the new kindergarten education policy implemented from 2017-18, a direct subsidy which is, in principle, sufficient for the provision of quality half-day service to all eligible children aged between three and six is provided to local non-profit-making kindergartens that join the new kindergarten education scheme. In tandem, the quality of education provided by the participating kindergartens is enhanced, including by raising the required teacher-pupil ratio from 1:15 to 1:11, revising the curriculum guide, promoting teachers' professional development, strengthening support to students with diverse needs, enhancing the quality assurance framework and promoting parent education. Out of about 1,030 kindergartens in 2018-19, about 780 were local non-profit-making kindergartens eligible to join the scheme and 753 had joined.

## Primary Education

Public-sector primary schools offer six years' free education. A child starts primary education at about age six. In September, 301,891 children were enrolled in 456 public-sector primary schools, comprising 34 government schools and 422 aided schools. In addition, 21 DSS primary schools offered 16,413 places and 64 private primary schools offered 40,191 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 half of its Primary 1 places as discretionary places, and parents may apply to only one government or aided school in any school catchment area, or 'school net'. The remaining half 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 the school net of their residence in order of preference.

## Secondary Education

Public-sector secondary schools also provide six years' free education. In September, 255,425 students were enrolled in 392 public-sector secondary schools, comprising 359 aided schools, 31 government schools and two caput schools that are subsidised mainly according to the number of students admitted. There were also 60 DSS secondary schools offering 55,357 places and 20 private secondary schools offering 8,580 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 (HKDSE).

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 district. 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.

The Task Force on Review of School Curriculum, formed in November 2017 following an announcement in the 2017 Policy Address, is undertaking a holistic review of the primary and secondary curricula to address implementation concerns and to better prepare students for the future, cater for their diverse learning needs and provide sufficient opportunities for their whole-person development. The task force has identified four pivotal areas, namely whole-person development, catering for learner diversity, multiple pathways, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, for deliberation. It will consolidate directional recommendations and submit a final report to the government by end-2019 or early 2020.

### **Senior Secondary Curriculum**

The senior secondary curriculum 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. Most students 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 2018-20 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 HKDSE Examination. This certification receives worldwide recognition. Over 280 tertiary institutions worldwide, including renowned schools, recognise the qualification for admission purposes, and more are being added.

In 2017, about 90 per cent of Secondary 6 graduates pursued further full-time studies, among whom about 10 per cent studied outside Hong Kong.

### **Chinese History Education**

Chinese history is an integral part of the curriculum for all primary and secondary schools. Learning content on the Chinese nation, Chinese history and Chinese culture is included in the General Studies subject at primary level. At junior secondary level, all schools should offer Chinese History as an independent compulsory subject from 2018-19, and devote about two periods per week to Chinese History. At senior secondary level, Chinese History is an elective subject. To enhance students' interest in learning the subject, the revised Junior Secondary

Chinese History subject curriculum framework was promulgated in May 2018 and would be implemented progressively from Secondary 1 in September 2020.

### **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 related closely to our daily lives.

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

Elements of Basic Law education have long been incorporated into the curricula and learning activities of primary and secondary schools. The subjects involved include General Studies at primary level, Life and Society and Geography at junior secondary level, Liberal Studies at senior secondary level, and Chinese History and History at 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 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 support measures to facilitate learning in English. At senior secondary level, schools can select either Chinese or English as the medium of instruction on a subject basis.

Schools are encouraged to devise a whole-school language policy in line with the policy goal on medium of instruction, sustain their good practices in promoting language learning and deepen the impact of ‘reading to learn’ by extending it to language across the curriculum through exposing students to a variety of texts of different themes. Schools are also encouraged to leverage technology to provide 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 about 400 Native English-speaking Teachers (NETs) working in secondary schools and over 460 NETs in primary schools. They work with local English teachers to enhance teaching and make English learning experiences more authentic for students. They help create a rich English language environment and promote innovative teaching strategies. Overall, the scheme improves classroom practices and students' attitudes towards learning English.

### ***Non-Chinese-speaking Students***

The government encourages and supports the early integration of non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) students into the community, including by helping them adapt to the local education system and master the Chinese language. The Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework helps primary and secondary NCS students overcome difficulties in learning Chinese as a second language. Complementary measures include professional training for teachers, learning and teaching resources, and funding for schools to provide intensive Chinese Language teaching and create an inclusive learning environment. Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) is offered at senior secondary level as an additional channel, to help NCS students obtain an alternative Chinese language qualification and prepare them for further studies and career pursuits. In addition to the HKDSE qualification, the subject is also pegged at Qualifications Framework (QF) levels 1 to 3. It is accepted for admission to UGC-funded universities and most post-secondary institutions, as well as appointments to the civil service.

The Chinese Language Learning Support Centre offers support programmes for NCS students and professional development workshops for teachers. It conducts workshops for parents to encourage parental support for their children in learning Chinese.

UGC-funded universities accept various Chinese Language qualifications under specified circumstances as alternatives to the HKDSE so that their applicants may meet the general entrance requirements under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System. These qualifications include the General Certificate of Secondary Education, International General Certificate of Secondary Education, and General Certificate of Education AS-Level and A-Level. Similar arrangements are available for admission to sub-degree programmes. Eligible NCS students taking these Chinese Language examinations pay subsidised fees which are the same as the HKDSE Chinese Language examination fee. Those with financial needs may further receive half or full remission of the subsidised examination fees.

The government works with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to hold district-based programmes, supported by the Language Fund, to motivate NCS children to learn Chinese through fun activities. For NCS school leavers, course providers offer vocational Chinese language courses pegged at QF level 1 or 2.

## Education of Students with Special Educational Needs

Students with more severe or multiple disabilities are referred to special schools for intensive support, subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and parents' consent. Others with special educational needs (SEN) will attend ordinary schools. As at September, there were 60 aided special schools, 21 of which had boarding facilities, providing about 9,000 school places and 1,150 boarding places. Some 49,080 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. The Learning Support Grant, the major additional resource, is adjusted annually according to changes in the composite consumer price index (CPI). Professional officers from the bureau visit these schools regularly to advise on school policies and support measures in implementing integrated education.

In 2018-19, about two-thirds of public-sector ordinary primary and secondary schools are provided with an additional teaching post intended to be an SEN coordinator to support integrated education. A teacher with relevant training is assigned to this post. All public-sector ordinary schools also receive the School-based Educational Psychology Service, under which the ratio of educational psychologists to schools is 1:4 in schools with a large number of students with SEN. Schools have additional resources to employ school-based speech therapists or procure school-based speech therapy services for students with speech and language impairment. As at the beginning of 2018-19, about 42 per cent and 30 per cent of teachers in public-sector primary and secondary schools respectively had completed structured training programmes of 30 hours or more to help them cater for students with SEN.

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

## Gifted Education

Gifted students receive government support to develop their potential. Professional development programmes, together with learning and teaching resources, are designed to equip teachers with knowledge and skills in gifted education. School networks at both primary and secondary levels are organised to promote professional exchange among schools and teachers. Territory-wide competitions in different disciplines provide a platform for students to demonstrate their areas of strength and widen their horizons. Outstanding students thus identified are given further training and nominated to take part in international competitions.

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

## Information Technology in Education

Under the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education, the major measure of setting up Wi-Fi on campus for some 1,000 public-sector and DSS schools was basically

completed in 2017-18. All public-sector and DSS schools also received an extra recurrent government funding in the same school year to strengthen their IT staffing support for e-learning and education initiatives which would harness IT. Professional development programmes for teachers, on-site support under the IT in Education Centre of Excellence Scheme and online resources serve to help schools implement e-learning.

### **Post-secondary Education**

Hong Kong has 22 local degree-awarding post-secondary education institutions, eight of which are funded by the public through the UGC, namely the City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Lingnan University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Education University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the University of Hong Kong. The other 14 are the publicly funded HKAPA, the self-financing Open University of Hong Kong, the VTC's Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong and 11 approved post-secondary colleges registered under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance, namely the Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Centennial College, Chu Hai College of Higher Education, Gratia Christian College, HKCT Institute of Higher Education, Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, UOW College Hong Kong, Tung Wah College and Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education. Together with providers of locally accredited sub-degree programmes, there are about 30 post-secondary institutions.

In terms of full-time studies in the 2018-19 academic year, the UGC-funded universities and the HKAPA together provided around 15,200 publicly funded, first-year-first-degree intake places, while self-financing undergraduate programmes offered about 9,400 places. The UGC-funded universities and the self-financing, degree-awarding institutions also provided around 5,000 senior-year undergraduate places and 9,400 top-up degree places respectively, mainly for sub-degree graduates. At sub-degree level, about 21,500 self-financing and 10,600 publicly funded intake places were available.

At postgraduate level, 2,500 and 5,600 UGC-funded taught and research places were available in 2018-19 respectively. As regards self-financing places, taught and research programmes registered actual enrolments of 41,200 and 3,900 respectively in 2018-19.

The government strives to provide secondary school leavers with flexible, diversified pathways with multiple entry and exit points through promoting the quality and sustainable development of the publicly funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors. In 2018-19, nearly 80 per cent of the relevant age cohort had access to post-secondary education. Among them, about 50 per cent had access to degree education, including 31 per cent enrolled in publicly funded undergraduate programmes.

The Task Force on Review of Research Policy and Funding, established in October 2017, conducted a holistic review of the research support strategy and the level and allocation mechanism of research funding for Hong Kong's higher education sector, and submitted its final report to the government in September 2018. Its recommendations were accepted by the government in full, including increasing research funding substantially; setting up a Research



Matching Grant Scheme; introducing three new fellowship schemes for researchers; reviewing the RGC's mode of operations; streamlining and rationalising the RGC's three existing collaborative research funding schemes; setting up an internal government liaison group to improve coordination among different funding bodies; and adopting a common researcher identity for grant applications.

The Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education, set up in October 2017, submitted its review report to the government in December 2018. The report reaffirmed the government policy of supporting the parallel development of the publicly funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors. Its recommendations included the need to set a clear policy on the development of self-financing post-secondary education; more sharply differentiating the positioning of associate degree and higher diploma qualifications; strengthening support for self-financing post-secondary institutions and students; and forging a reformed and unified regulatory framework. The government is following up on the recommendations.

Under the 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. In 2018-19, over 3,200 Hong Kong students applied, about 1,500 were given offers and around 580 subsequently enrolled. In 2019-20, the number of participating institutions will increase from 102 to 112, located in 20 Mainland provinces and municipalities and one autonomous region.

### ***Increasing Post-secondary Education Opportunities***

The government promotes the sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary sector by providing land and premises at nominal premium and rent, interest-free start-up loans, the \$3.52 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund (SPEF), student finance, quality assurance subsidies and matching grants.

As at end-2018, about \$7.7 billion of start-up loans to post-secondary institutions out of a total \$9 billion commitment had been approved, while about \$440 million of matching grants out of a commitment of up to \$500 million had been approved under the seventh Matching Grant Scheme.

The number of publicly funded, senior-year undergraduate places available at UGC-funded universities for sub-degree graduates is being increased by 1,000 between 2015-16 and 2018-19. This offers more opportunities for such students to obtain a publicly funded degree education and fosters a flexible multi-entry post-secondary education framework.

The SPEF provides the Self-financing Post-Secondary Scholarship Scheme to outstanding students pursuing full-time, locally accredited self-financing sub-degree or undergraduate programmes, and granted \$83.4 million in scholarships and awards to 5,199 recipients in 2017-18. The fund also supports worthwhile non-works projects under the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme to enhance the quality of self-financing post-secondary education, and approved a total of more than \$26 million in the same academic year for 11 projects.

The Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors, launched in 2015-16, subsidises students to pursue designated full-time, locally accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines. It was regularised in 2018-19, with the number of subsidised places increased from about 1,000 to about 3,000 per cohort. Eligible current students of the designated programmes will also receive the subsidy from that year. The scheme will be expanded from 2019-20 to subsidise about 2,000 students per cohort to pursue designated full-time, locally accredited self-financing sub-degree programmes in selected disciplines. Eligible current students of the designated programmes will also receive the subsidy.

The Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong was launched in 2017-18. It provides an annual subsidy of around \$30,000, subject to adjustment based on the composite CPI, to eligible students pursuing full-time, locally accredited local and non-local self-financing undergraduate programmes, including top-up degree programmes, offered in Hong Kong by 16 eligible institutions. The subsidy applies to Hong Kong students who have attained '3322'<sup>2</sup> in the HKDSE for enrolment in eligible first-year-first-degree programmes, and those with relevant sub-degrees for enrolment in eligible top-up degree programmes. In the 2018-19 academic year, about 17,000 students are subsidised.

### ***Governance of Post-secondary Institutions***

All UGC-funded universities, the Open University and the HKAPA are statutory bodies governed by their own ordinances. Eleven approved post-secondary colleges are registered under and 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.

### **Vocational and Professional Education and Training and Adult Education**

The Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) was established in April to promote VPET. It comprises members from a diversity of backgrounds: schools, parents and employers, as well as the community service and labour sectors. It advises the government on how VPET can be better promoted through career and life planning education in secondary schools to cater for students' diverse abilities and interests, and how best to foster closer business-school collaboration.

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

The VTC is a statutory body that offers VPET for school leavers and adult learners. It provided some 250,000 full-time and part-time places during 2017-18.

Quality-assured, internationally recognised full-time and part-time courses up to master degree level are available for students completing Secondary 3 education or above, covering applied science, design, engineering, hospitality, child care, elderly and community services, business

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<sup>2</sup> '3322' refers to level 3 for Chinese Language and English Language and level 2 for Mathematics Compulsory Part and Liberal Studies.

administration and information technology. 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.

The VTC's government-funded Pilot Training and Support Scheme seeks to attract and retain talent for industries with a keen demand for labour, by integrating structured apprenticeships with clear career progression pathways. The scheme will be regularised in 2019-20, with the number of training places increased from 1,000 to 1,200 per year. The VTC also receives recurrent funding to provide industrial attachment for about 9,000 students every year.

### ***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 2018-19 enrolment exceeded 4,000 students.

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

The Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses offers evening secondary courses conducted by approved course providers. About 1,100 adult students were enrolled in 2018-19.

### **Student Achievements**

Hong Kong students excel in international competitions. In 2018, Hong Kong teams won a total of four gold, 15 silver and five bronze medals in the International Mathematical Olympiad, International Physics Olympiad, International Olympiad of Metropolises, International Olympiad in Informatics and International Junior Science Olympiad.

In music, Hong Kong students won a bronze in the Singapore International Choral Festival; one first prize, two second prizes, one third prize and a special prize in the International Choral Competition Polifonico Guido d' Arezzo; one second place in the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod; and a grand prix award, five golds and one silver in the International Youth Music Festival. The city also recorded two champions in the World Choir Games and one young scholar in the Young Scholars Programme.

In the visual arts, Hong Kong students won two golds and a silver in Infomatrix-Asia; eight golds in the Mizyal Gallery Museum Children's Art Competition Gaziantep; 16 first-class honours in the International Year of the Reef Art and Design Competition; a special award in the Walt Disney Family Museum Teen Animation Festival International; an award for Best Collection – Golden Brush in the Small Montmartre of Bitola; and a number of prizes in the International Children's Exhibition of Fine Arts Lidice.

In sports, Hong Kong students won a bronze at the Youth Olympic Games; two golds, four silvers and three bronzes at the International School Sport Federation Gymnasiade; third place

for girls at the Asian School Badminton Championship; and one gold and three bronzes at the Badminton Asia U17 and U15 Championships.

## **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. The QF covers academic, VPET and continuing education qualifications. It 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 local self-accrediting institutions. The government maintains a web-based Qualifications Register, which lists the qualifications and associated learning programmes recognised under the framework.

As at 2018, the government had helped 23 industries<sup>3</sup> set up industry training advisory committees under the QF, covering over 50 per cent of the labour force. A major task of each committee 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.

The Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism under the QF enables practitioners to obtain formal recognition for the knowledge, skills and experience they acquire in the workplace, and facilitates further learning without the need to start from scratch. The QF also provides for credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) to support learning pathways for learners, and helps institutions develop and refine their CAT systems.

To ensure the sustainability of the framework, the government operates the \$1 billion QF Fund to provide a steady income for QF-related initiatives. The fund received a fresh injection of \$1.2 billion in March.

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the QF, the bureau organised the HKQF International Conference in September to enhance the international image and recognition of the QF.

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

Two quality assurance bodies monitor the quality of the post-secondary education sector. The HKCAAVQ is the statutory body responsible for the quality assurance of all operators and

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<sup>3</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; arboriculture and horticulture; and travel.

programmes except the UGC-funded universities, which are self-accredited. The Quality Assurance Council (QAC), a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under the UGC's aegis, conducts quality audits of the UGC-funded universities to assure the quality of all their programmes at the levels of sub-degree, first degree and above, however funded, is sustained, improved and internationally competitive.

The government works with the HKCAAVQ and QAC through the Liaison Committee on Quality Assurance to enhance and rationalise the quality assurance required for self-financing post-secondary education.

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

This ordinance regulates non-local courses of higher and professional education conducted in Hong Kong through a system of registration to ensure the standards of the courses and qualifications are comparable to those in their home countries. It protects consumers by guarding against the marketing of non-local courses which do not fulfil the registration criteria. As at end-September, 1,155 non-local courses were registered or exempted from registration under the ordinance.

### **More Funding Resources**

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

This fund seeks to raise the quality of school education and promote quality school education. As at end-August, it had approved about 9,970 projects involving about \$4.54 billion.

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

A recurrent Career and Life Planning Grant of about \$610,000 is disbursed to public-sector and DSS schools providing senior secondary education to implement life planning education that prepares 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 opt for regular teaching posts instead of the grant to further consolidate their experiences with more stable teaching manpower.

The bureau encourages close collaboration between schools and various sectors in organising activities for secondary students to enhance their exposure to the corporate world and provide first-hand experience in different trades and careers. It implements the Business-School Partnership Programme, conducting activities with over 170 business partners in 2017-18 that benefited more than 170,000 students.

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

School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes subsidise activities that help 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. In the 2018-19 school year, 898 schools and 171 NGOs received the subsidies, helping about 170,000 students.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund, established by the bureau and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, supports eligible, financially needy students to participate in life-wide learning activities organised or recognised by schools that foster whole-person development. It allocated \$78 million to 936 schools in 2017-18, subsidising about 210,000 students.

### ***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 means-tested assistance, including fee remission under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme and an additional grant to defray their kindergarten-related expenses. In the school year of 2017-18, subsidies totalling around \$401 million were granted to about 41,700 students.

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

At primary and secondary levels, means-tested assistance covers textbooks, travel, internet access and examination fees. In the 2017-18 school year, around \$825 million was disbursed to about 203,500 students to pay for essential textbooks and miscellaneous school-related expenses, \$347 million to 142,900 students as travel subsidies, \$148 million to 130,400 families to subsidise internet access by students at home, and around \$33 million in examination fee remission for some 15,000 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 2017-18 academic year, around \$885 million of grants and \$192 million of loans were provided to about 21,700 students. Eligible students pursuing full-time, locally accredited self-financing post-secondary programmes can also apply for similar assistance. In the 2017-18 academic year, around \$877 million of grants and \$168 million of loans were provided to around 18,000 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 2017-18 academic year, about 31,200 students received loans amounting to around \$1,557 million.

Travel subsidies totalling around \$124 million were provided to about 33,600 post-secondary students.

### *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*

For the 2018-19 academic year, a means-tested subsidy of up to \$16,800 or non-means-tested subsidy of \$5,600 per year is provided to eligible local students pursuing undergraduate studies in designated Mainland institutions under the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme. In 2017-18, more than \$35 million was granted in subsidies to 3,056 students, and in 2018-19, the scheme attracted about 3,400 applications.

### **Scholarships**

#### *Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence*

The Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme supports up to 100 local students per cohort to pursue undergraduate or postgraduate studies at world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong. Since the scheme was launched in the 2015-16 academic year, it had awarded the scholarship to over 370 students and granted scholarships and bursaries totalling \$141 million. The scheme will be regularised in 2019-20, with the scholarship ceiling raised from \$250,000 to \$300,000 per student per annum. Students with financial needs may also apply for a means-tested bursary that provides up to \$200,000 per annum to cover living and study-related expenses.

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

The \$3.07 billion HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund awards scholarships 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. 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 to enhance self-financing post-secondary education. In 2017-18, the two funds distributed 9,709 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 on the 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 representatives of the school sponsoring body, the principal, elected teachers, parents and alumni, and independent members.

The Task Force on School-based Management Policy, formed in November 2017, examines the current implementation of the policy in aided schools and ways of strengthening school-based management and reducing the administrative work of teachers and principals so they can focus more on teaching and taking better care of students. Following a consultation with stakeholders on a number of preliminary proposals, the task force unanimously supported the proposal on providing additional resources to meet the sector's imminent needs for strengthening administrative support in schools, which the government later accepted and announced in the 2018 Policy Address for implementation from 2019-20. The task force is studying the views collected on the other proposals and will submit its review report to the government in mid-2019.

The School Development and Accountability Framework fosters sustained school development through school self-evaluation, complemented by external school reviews which provide schools with suggestions for improvement.

## Professional Development of Educators

### Teachers

The Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals advises the bureau on policies and measures 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, organised by the bureau, recognises accomplished teachers and fosters a culture of excellence in the teaching profession. In 2017-18, awards and certificates of merit were presented to 38 teachers.

The Hong Kong Teachers' Centre organises conferences and other events to promote the continuing professional development of teachers. It also arranges physical and mental health activities to help teachers maintain work-life balance.

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



The Task Force on Professional Development of Teachers, set up in November 2017, studies options for establishing a professional ladder for teachers; the ranking arrangement of school management in primary, secondary and special schools; and the timetable for an all-graduate teaching force. The task force found wide support in a consultation for the implementation of the all-graduate teaching force policy as soon as possible and submitted its timetable recommendation to the government, which later announced in the 2018 Policy Address that the policy would be introduced in public-sector primary and secondary schools in 2019-20. The task force will submit its final report to the government in early 2019.

### **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 1,600 aspiring principals have attained the Certification for Principalship and about half of them have become principals.

### **School-based Support Services**

School-based support services foster leadership at schools, particularly among middle managers; disseminate informed practices to improve learning, teaching and assessment strategies; and support professional learning among teachers. In 2017-18, the bureau provided school-based support services, including those financed by the Education Development Fund, to 300 secondary schools, 400 primary schools, 34 special schools, and 201 kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres.

Regional education offices offer school-based support services 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. There are about 1,400 such associations. The bureau funded about 3,500 school-based and district-based home-school cooperation activities in 2017-18.

The Task Force on Home-school Cooperation and Parent Education, formed in December 2017, reviews the existing approach to promoting home-school cooperation and parent education with a view to helping children grow up happily and healthily. It will submit the final report to the government in April 2019.

### **Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education**

The committee advises the government on civic education, works 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. It promotes the core civic values – ‘Respect and inclusiveness’, ‘Responsibility’ and ‘Love’ – to encourage the public to show respect for others and fulfil their civic responsibilities. The committee also promotes the

Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law to enhance the public's understanding of 'one country, two systems' and sense of national identity.

The committee's Civic Education Resource Centre at the Youth Square houses reference materials on civic education and youth development. It also organises training courses, seminars, sharing sessions, film shows, guided tours and exhibitions.

### **Youth Development Commission**

The Youth Development Commission was established in April. Chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, it serves as a steering committee to enhance policy coordination within the government and enable holistic and more effective examination and discussion of issues of concern to young people. It will promote cross-bureau and cross-departmental collaboration and undertake to address young people's concerns about education, career development and home ownership, and encourage their participation in politics as well as public policy discussion.

The commission pinned down three broad policy directions for its future work, namely, assisting in young people's selection of suitable study pathways, facilitating their career development and upward mobility, and strengthening communication channels with them. To support the commission's work, the government announced in the 2018-19 Budget reserving a sum of \$1 billion, and of this, it further announced in the 2018 Policy Address that \$500 million would first be allocated to implement programmes and measures in support of the above directions.

Three task forces are set up under the commission. In the light of the policy directions endorsed by the commission, the Task Force on Youth Exchange and Internship will provide advice on non-local youth exchange and internship programmes, while the Task Force on Youth Development Fund and Programmes will oversee the Youth Development Fund and other youth development activities. Both task forces will also help implement relevant youth programmes. The Task Force on Youth Outreach and Engagement will keep in touch with young people through different channels to enable the government and the commission to gauge their pulse, understand their views and adopt their suggestions.

The commission and the Home Affairs Bureau, through organising or sponsoring programmes such as the Youth Ambassadors Programme, provide young people with opportunities to display their talent to the fullest, sharpen their competitive edge and become future masters of Hong Kong with vision, creativity, commitment to society and leadership qualities. Offered under the various programmes are internship and exchange, start-up support, youth life planning, volunteerism and commendation schemes.

### **Space Sharing Scheme for Youth**

This scheme is implemented through a community-business-government tripartite partnership to provide a platform for owners of revitalised industrial and commercial buildings to contribute floor areas for the operation of co-working space or studios, to support start-ups of emerging industries and young people who are setting up their own businesses, and to support arts and cultural development. Participating owners rent out space to suitable NGOs at no more than

one-third of the market rental or operate such space themselves. The operators provide leasing options and support to start-ups, young entrepreneurs and artists at concessionary rents no higher than half of the market rental.

### **Mainland-bound Thematic Youth Internship Programmes**

In 2018, the Home Affairs Bureau collaborated with the Palace Museum and the Wolong National Nature Reserve again to offer two internship programmes that were launched in 2017 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR. The two programmes increased young Hong Kong people's knowledge of the relevant disciplines and professional fields and enhanced their understanding of the country's developments. In view of the remarkable achievements made under the programmes during the pioneering year, the bureau also introduced another two new programmes in 2018, the Youth Internship Programme at Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Youth Internship Programme at Dunhuang. Taken together, all four programmes provided about 70 unique, in-depth and valuable thematic internship opportunities in 2018 to young Hong Kong people.

### **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. It relays children's views on government initiatives to the Family Council for consideration in assessing the impact of government policies on the family. In 2018, the Children's Rights Education Funding Scheme supported NGOs to conduct 31 projects to enhance understanding of children's rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Helping Ethnic Minorities Integrate into Community**

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. District-based Integration Programmes help ethnic minorities better understand Hong Kong and encourage them to join community activities, the Ambassador Scheme introduces public services to ethnic minorities and makes referrals where necessary, and the Youth Ambassador Scheme reaches out to ethnic minority youths 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.

### **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.

**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)

Youth Development Commission: [www.ydc.gov.hk](http://www.ydc.gov.hk)