

LCQ4: Provision of schools for the new public rental housing developments on Anderson Road

Following is a question by the Hon Ip Kin-yuen and a reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

Located in the Anderson Road Development Area (Development Area), On Tat Estate, the intake of which was completed in 2016, and On Tai Estate, the intake of which will be completed within this year, can accommodate a total of 50 000 residents. While the authorities have planned to provide four kindergartens, three primary schools and one secondary school within the Development Area, so far only one half-day kindergarten has been completed and commissioned. This has resulted in quite a number of newly moved-in residents scrambling, for several months, for places in nearby schools for their children. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the authorities' projection on the population of children in the aforesaid estates who are of ages for attending kindergartens and primary and secondary schools; the criteria adopted for planning the number of kindergartens and primary and secondary schools within the Development Area; the original and latest schedules for the commissioning of those school premises, and the number of places to be offered to new students at each of the levels;

(2) of the specific measures to be put in place to assist the students concerned in obtaining school places pursuant to the "principle of vicinity"; the number of applications made by residents in the Development Area for change of schools for their children and the outcome of them; and

(3) of the reasons why the construction progress of the school premises within the Development Area is lagging behind; whether it will review the relevant arrangements and expedite the progress of the works; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Under the prevailing mechanism, the Planning Department will reserve sites for kindergarten (KG) and school development when preparing town plans and planning large-scale residential developments having regard to the planned population intake and on the basis of the needs for community services, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Hong Kong Planning

Standards and Guidelines. In the process, the Education Bureau (EDB) will be consulted.

When there are KG premises in public housing estates available for use, the EDB will take into account the supply and demand of KG places of the areas concerned and other relevant factors, and launch school allocation exercises (SAEs) as appropriate upon receipt of request from the Housing Department. Relevant factors include the demand and supply of KG places in the district and the "Tertiary Planning Units" (TPUs) concerned, school-age children population projections, reprovisioning needs of existing KGs, and provision of Government-owned quality KG premises to increase the number of KGs that need not charge school fees to defray rental expenses. For the four six-classroom estate KG premises at the Anderson Road Development Area, two are in On Tat Estate. One of them has already been in operation and the other one will commence operation in the 2018/19 school year. The remaining two premises are in On Tai Estate. According to information available to the EDB, the total KG places available in the TPU in which On Tai Estate is located and its neighbouring TPU are sufficient in meeting the demand of the KG student population. Nevertheless, having considered the above-mentioned factors on provision of premises, we would launch the relevant SAE shortly.

Insofar as planning of public sector primary and secondary school building projects is concerned, land is a scarce resource and construction of new secondary and primary school premises involve immense resources. We have to consider with prudence if addition of a new operating school would be commensurate with the long term sustainable development of the district concerned so as to avoid negative impacts on the steady development of the school sector as a whole. As far as reserved school sites at a public housing development are concerned, the EDB has to consider factors including the planned development of the area concerned, the school-age population projections which are compiled based on the population projections updated regularly by the Census and Statistics Department and the projection of population distribution released by the Planning Department, the actual number of existing students and school places available at various levels, the prevailing education policies, other factors which may affect the supply and demand of school places, etc., in order to decide if a premises should be used for operating a new school or reprovisioning an existing school, and when to kick-start the relevant school building programme. Furthermore, a new school building project, from planning to completion, involves various stages. Variations and uncertainties may come into play during the process.

The EDB has reserved four 30-classroom school sites at the Anderson Road Development Area, including three for primary school use and one for secondary school use. The building works for one of the primary school premises are expected to complete by December 2018. The secondary school building project is undergoing the detailed design stage, and we will seek funding approval for it as soon as practicable. Regarding the remaining two reserved primary school sites, we have launched an SAE in end-2017 to allocate one of the sites for reprovisioning purpose. The allocation result will likely be announced by the end of this month. We have also commenced the preliminary preparatory works for the project at the other primary school

site, and we plan to launch the SAE in 2019.

The EDB has the responsibility to provide sufficient public sector school places for all school-age students. At present, the provision of public sector secondary school places is planned on a territory-wide basis. Under the Secondary School Places Allocation mechanism, netting of school places from neighbouring areas would be arranged as and when necessary to ensure a stable supply of school places in each district and to provide parents with more choices. As far as the Kwun Tong district is concerned, there are still a considerable number of secondary school places available at present.

The provision of public sector primary school places is planned on a district basis. Under the Primary One Admission (POA) System, allocation of primary one (P1) places is school net-based. Under each POA cycle, the supply and demand of P1 places in individual districts/school nets are subject to changes due to various factors, e.g. whether parents would choose to apply for public sector schools, the number of newly arrived children, the timing of new housing estates intake (including the school-age population concerned and parents' willingness to change schools), leading to possible year-on-year changes. In accordance with the consensus reached with the sector, the EDB has been adopting flexible measures to increase the provision of places to meet the projected transient demand for school places so as to minimise the impacts on schools when the demand subsides. Such measures include borrowing school places from neighbouring school nets, using vacant classrooms to operate additional classes, operating time-limited schools in vacant school premises, temporarily allocating more students to each P1 class, etc.

On Tai Estate and On Tat Estate are situated in School Net 46 and School Net 48 respectively in the Kwun Tong district. Over the past few years, school places were borrowed from School Net 46 to School Net 48 in order to provide enough school places and choices in accordance with the aforementioned established arrangements. Under such arrangements, both school nets are not required to borrow school places from other districts.

With the gradual intake of the public housing estates in the Anderson Road Development Area, the EDB has distributed through various channels information leaflets about schools in the Kwun Tong district and the procedures about transfer of school to residents who are going to move into the district for reference. We have also been discussing with the schools concerned to make good use of their vacant school places to cater for the needs of students newly moved into the district. For parents who wish to arrange transfer of school for their children, they may either approach the EDB or contact their preferred schools direct.

In POA 2017, there were about 40 and 70 new applications for admission to P1, including requests for change of school net due to change in residential address and late applications from new arrivals, from the residents in School Net 46 (including On Tai Estate) and School Net 48 (including On Tat Estate) respectively. All the children concerned have been allocated public sector P1 places in the district. As regards POA 2018, the

EDB has received 60 and 40 such new applications from the residents in School Net 46 and School Net 48 respectively during the period between the school choice-making for central allocation in February and June 2018. All the applicant children concerned have also been allocated public sector P1 places in the district. There are still surplus public sector P1 places in Kwun Tong. The EDB would keep in view the situation and provide timely assistance to parents as needed.

Regarding applications for transfer to schools in the Kwun Tong district, the EDB has arranged 160 primary students newly moved to On Tai Estate or On Tat Estate to change to schools in the district in the 2017/18 school year. As at end-June this year, the EDB has received a total of about 200 applications from students residing in On Tat Estate or On Tai Estate applying for transfer to Primary 2 (P2) to Primary 6 (P6) classes of the schools in the Kwun Tong district in the 2018/19 school year. As the situation in respect of school places available and vacant classrooms has only become clearer by early July, the EDB is working with the schools concerned on the additional P2 to P6 classes to be operated and has started to inform parents of the school placement arrangements of individual levels for their children. All the students could be referred to schools in the district for admission. As regards the transfer to KGs and secondary schools, in the current school year the EDB has received only a few cases seeking placement assistance for the 2018/19 school year. All these cases have been handled in accordance with our prevailing practice and applicants have been provided with information on the vacancies of the KGs and secondary schools in the district. The EDB will provide referral support if needed.

In sum, the EDB has to take into account various factors before initiating a school building project. Hence, the commencement date of a new estate school may not necessarily tie in with the population intake schedule of the new public housing estate concerned. We will continue to provide necessary assistance to parents who need to seek transfer of school for their children as a result of moving home.

LCQ18: Illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward by motor vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Dr Raymond So Wai-man, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

Under section 93 of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374), the Commissioner for Transport (the Commissioner) may suspend the licence of a

motor vehicle concerned in respect of the offences specified in Schedule 4 (including section 52 (in contravention of the restriction on the use of vehicles)). The period of suspension for the first offence is three months and that for subsequent offence in respect of the same motor vehicle is six months. Any person who uses a private car without a valid hire car permit to carry passengers for reward (commonly known as "white licence cars' service") is in breach of section 52. Some members of the public have pointed out that as white licence cars' service has become rampant in recent years, the authorities should amend the legislation to lengthen the period of suspension of the licences of white licence cars or even cancel their licences permanently to enhance the deterrent effect. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of vehicles the licence of which was suspended under the aforesaid provision in each of the past three years and the periods of suspension concerned, together with a breakdown by vehicle class and the offence involved;

(2) of the respective numbers of cases in each of the past three years in which the registered owners of vehicles, under section 90 of Cap 374, (i) made representations in writing to the Commissioner and (ii) applied in writing to the Commissioner for a hearing before a Transport Tribunal (Tribunal) to show cause why the vehicle licences should not be suspended; among such cases, the respective numbers of cases ruled by the Tribunal that the owners concerned had shown the cause, with a breakdown by vehicle class and the offence involved; and

(3) given that in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council in May this year in respect of the permanent cancellation of licences of white licence cars, the authorities indicated that the Transport Department was then reviewing the need to raise the penalty for the relevant offences and would consult the trade concerned, of the details and timetables of the review and the consultation exercise?

Reply:

President,

The Government has all along been concerned about the situation on illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward by private cars and light goods vehicles (LGV). The Government has been taking stern enforcement actions against illegal carriage of passengers for reward and will not condone such activities. Sections 52(3) and 93 and Schedule 4 of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374) stipulate that an offender who uses a private car or LGV for the illegal carriage of passengers for reward, or who solicits or attempts to solicit any person to travel in such vehicles, is liable to a fine of \$5,000 and three months' imprisonment on the first conviction. The licence of the subject vehicle may also be suspended for three months. On the second or subsequent conviction, the offender is liable to a fine of \$10,000 and six months' imprisonment. For a subsequent offence in respect of the same motor vehicle, the licence of that vehicle may be suspended for six months. Besides, according to section 69 of Cap 374, if a person is convicted

of any offence under Cap 374 in connection with the driving of a motor vehicle (including illegal carriage of passengers for reward), the court may disqualify him from driving for such period as it thinks fit.

In accordance with section 90(2)(c)(i) of Cap 374, the registered owner whose vehicle licence was suspended may make representations in writing to the Commissioner showing cause why the vehicle licence should not be suspended within 14 days after the receipt of the notice issued by the Commissioner; or by virtue of section 90(2)(c)(ii) of Cap 374, he may apply in writing to the Commissioner for a hearing before a Transport Tribunal to show cause why the vehicle licence should not be suspended. The Transport Tribunal is a statutory organisation independent of the Government, comprising non-official members appointed by the Government, including persons from the legal sector, District Council members and other professionals. Every case hearing of the Transport Tribunal is conducted by a chairman and two panel members.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Frankie Yick's question is as follows.

(1) The breakdown of cases involving the suspension of motor vehicle licences by the Transport Department (TD) from 2015 to 2017 in accordance with the section 93 of Cap 374 is tabulated below. In all these cases, the drivers have breached section 52(3) of Cap 374 by driving or using a motor vehicle, or suffering or permitting a motor vehicle to be driven or used, for the carriage of passengers for hire or reward without obtaining a valid hire car permit. As all cases are first offences, the licences were suspended for three months.

Year	Number of vehicles with their licences suspended			
	Private car	LGV	Private light bus	Total
2015	1	16	1	18
2016	6	2	1	9
2017	7	2	0	9

(2) During the same period, the TD has not received any representations made in writing to the Commissioner in accordance with section 90(2)(c)(i) of Cap 374 showing cause why the vehicle licences concerned should not be suspended.

As for applications made under section 90(2)(ii) of Cap 374 to the Commissioner for a hearing before a Transport Tribunal to show cause why the vehicle licences should not be suspended, the drivers of all these cases have contravened section 52(3) of Cap 374. The number of cases by vehicle types is tabulated below.

Year	Number of cases applying for a hearing before a Tribunal			
	Private car	LGV	Private light bus	Total
2015	0	1	1	2
2016	3	0	0	3
2017	2	0	0	2

All the judgments handed down by the Transport Tribunal in respect of the cases in the last three years upheld the decision that the vehicle licences concerned should be suspended.

(3) The Government is currently reviewing the need to raise the penalties for offences related to illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward by motor vehicles so as to enhance the deterrent effects. We aim to report specific proposals to the Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council and consult Members in the 2018-19 legislative year.

[Test results of targeted surveillance on coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms in ready-to-eat food all satisfactory](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 11) announced the results of a recently completed targeted food surveillance project on coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms (including *Staphylococcus aureus*) in ready-to-eat food, which showed that all samples passed the test.

A spokesman for the CFS said that a total of 300 ready-to-eat food samples were collected from different retail outlets (including online retailers) and food factories for testing of coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms this year. The samples included meat, poultry and their products (for example shredded chicken, siu mei and lo mei), salad, sashimi and sushi, dessert, Chinese cold dishes, sandwiches and steamed rice rolls.

The spokesman pointed out that *Staphylococcus aureus* is a common bacterium that can cause food poisoning. It exists widely in the environment and is commonly found in the nasal cavity, throat, hair and skin of healthy individuals. It is also present in large numbers in wounds and infected regions. If food handlers do not observe good personal hygiene, *Staphylococcus aureus* can pass to foods from them. Foods stored at ambient

temperature for a prolonged period will allow the toxin-producing *Staphylococcus aureus* to multiply and form elaborate enterotoxins which can cause food poisoning. Although most cases of infection are caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*, other coagulase-positive staphylococci species can also produce enterotoxins which can lead to food poisoning.

Food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms is usually associated with foods that require considerable handling during preparation and no subsequent cooking is required before consumption. The poisoning risk cannot be eliminated by reheating as enterotoxins produced by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms cannot be destroyed under normal cooking temperatures. Common symptoms of food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms include nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain, often accompanied by diarrhoea.

"Despite the fact that test results of the samples were all satisfactory, the trade and the public should not take the risk lightly. They should always maintain good personal, environmental and food hygiene to ensure food safety. To prevent food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms, members of the public are reminded to keep perishable foods or leftovers at or below 4 degrees Celsius or above 60 degrees C. The trade should adhere to the Good Manufacturing Practice that cooked food should be cooled from 60 degrees C to 20 degrees C as quickly as possible (within two hours), and from 20 degrees C to 4 degrees C within four hours or less," the spokesman said.

LCQ2: Public playgrounds for children

Following is a question by Hon Vincent Cheng and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

It has been reported that 13 "rocking chairs", play equipment for children located in a public housing estate, were in a dilapidated state, but the Government merely replaced them with the same number of new "rocking chairs". Some members of the public have criticised that such play equipment was monotonous and uninteresting, and the spending of \$210,000 on such equipment appeared to be a waste of public money. On the other hand, one of the tasks of the Commission on Children, which was established by the Government in May this year, is to review the designs of children's playgrounds throughout the territory with a view to making playgrounds more interesting. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will comprehensively review and improve the designs and play equipment of the existing and the newly built playgrounds; if so, of the details and the implementation timetable;

(2) whether it will change the current standardised designs for children's playgrounds under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Housing Department by collecting ideas of creative designs through design competitions or public engagement exercises, so as to introduce in various playgrounds more thematic designs and special features, add play equipment which makes use of various natural materials such as water and sand for provision of sensory experience, as well as introduce play equipment which offers more challenges to children while complying with safety standards; and

(3) as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that a child has the right to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child, and as the findings of an opinion survey conducted by a local group have shown that parents generally consider that the designs of the existing public playgrounds for children have failed to cater for the intellectual and physical development needs of children of different ages, whether the authorities or the Commission on Children will examine if the existing facilities in children's playgrounds are able to cater for this right of the child, and whether they will revise the guidelines for designing playgrounds; if they will, of the details?

Reply:

President,

(1)&(2) The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) manages 640 leisure venues with outdoor children's playgrounds. A "universal play" concept is adopted by LCSD in planning for play equipment with a view to providing inclusive, interesting and innovative play equipment to cater for the needs of children of different ages and abilities and their parents. To strengthen the appeal to children, themes and popular play facilities such as climbing frames, slides and swings, etc. will also be included in the playgrounds as far as possible. All the facilities have to meet internationally recognised safety standards. In designing facilities for individual venues, LCSD and the relevant works departments will consider topographic features, site area and circumstances and views of the District Councils concerned, etc.

LCSD has been liaising with concern groups on children's play equipment and consulting them and the District Councils concerned on the design and play equipment in children's playgrounds for continuous improvement. To usher in brand new design concepts, LCSD, in collaboration with the relevant works departments, adopted the winning design of the Inclusive Play Space Design Ideas Competition as a prototype to build an innovative inclusive playground in Tuen Mun Park as part of a pilot scheme with inclusion of two natural elements of water and sand in the design. Through sand, water, light and shadow, play equipment that sways and spins, climbing frames and movable parts for knocking and touching, etc., children can enjoy the fun while acquiring different skills which will enhance their physical and psychological development. The inclusive playground in Tuen Mun is expected to open for public use in the third quarter of 2018.

In addition, as a pilot plan, workshops will be held to bring community involvement into the Kai Tak Avenue Park project in Kowloon City to gauge views from children and residents of the area on the provision of play equipment in the project. Suggestions received from the public will be put into practice as far as possible in accordance with government procurement regulations and procedures.

LCSD and the relevant works departments will summarise and draw reference from experiences gained from the above-mentioned pilot scheme and community involvement. Concern groups and organisations, as well as District Councils will be further consulted with a view to considering adopting the same approach in other suitable locations and projects.

In addition to focusing on the hardware of playgrounds, LCSD also organises themed fun days in playgrounds with various organisations to encourage active participation by families in games and activities, thereby energising public parks. Activities organised last year included "Storm the Park Days" featuring frisbee, painting, water play, model car, etc. and Orienteering@Park in large public parks.

According to information provided by the Transport and Housing Bureau, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) will provide recreational facilities for users of different age groups, including children's playground facilities, in its public rental housing (PRH) estates under the concept of "communal play areas". For example, HA will try to integrate children's playground facilities with other facilities, such as elderly fitness facilities, Tai Chi gardens, pavilions, etc., in the same recreational area to enable adults who need to take care of their accompanying children to use the recreational facilities together in the same area.

HA has all along been adopting a pragmatic approach and fulfilling international safety standards when designing children's playground, and has been selecting materials that are durable and easy to maintain. Whenever feasible, HA will also conduct public engagement activities to collect stakeholders' views on individual proposals of playground facilities. HA will also conduct reviews and opinion surveys one year after flats intake of new PRH estates.

Furthermore, in order to maintain a comfortable, healthy and safe living environment for the residents of PRH estates, HA and the Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) will, from time to time, gauge the views and needs of the residents and stakeholders in order to continuously improve the children's playgrounds and other estate facilities. Where possible, HA will also replace or upgrade various kinds of playground facilities at appropriate locations.

Through meetings of the EMACs, resident representatives and other stakeholders, including local District Council members, can participate in reviewing the need for replacing the playground facilities in the estates. HA will consider various factors when replacing the playground facilities, including changes in the demographic structure of individual estate, conditions of the existing facilities, environmental limitations, future

maintenance and repair issues, etc., in order to install suitable facilities to address the needs of the residents.

(3) As mentioned above, LCSD is committed to providing diversified play equipment at its playgrounds for children of different ages and abilities to help them attain a balanced development of mind and body, enhance their interaction with others and stimulate exploration of the surroundings through acquiring different skills by the play equipment.

Most of the children's playgrounds under LCSD provide play equipment for groups of children aged between two and five as well as five and 12. In addition, play facilities of inclusive design are available at a number of children's playgrounds (e.g. Quarry Bay Park and Sha Tin Park) for the enjoyment of children with or without disabilities. Diverse types of play equipment are installed at the venues, including tactile play panels and movable parts in different shapes suitable for visually-impaired children, movable parts that produce sounds when knocked, as well as transfer platforms or ramps that help children using wheelchairs to use facilities and allow them to join other children in playing with these facilities. These facilities enable children with or without disabilities to play and grow up in a harmonious and happy environment and promote their physical and psychological development.

LCSD will draw reference from overseas examples, bring in more community involvement and work in close collaboration with the relevant works departments with a view to providing more innovative, challenging and inclusive play equipment in planning children's playgrounds in large public park projects and renovating the play equipment at children's playgrounds in major public parks to meet the needs of children.

LCQ10: Programmes for training educational psychologists

Following is a question by the Hon Dennis Kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Question:

It has been learnt that educational psychologists (EPs) play a rather important role under the policy on integrated education. Their tasks include conducting psycho-educational assessments for children suspected to have special educational needs, as well as providing counselling services and accommodation arrangements for them. At present, the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University take turn each year to run local

master degree programmes for training EPs, which are funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC). Meanwhile, the Government announced in the 2016 Policy Address that it would enhance the School-based Educational Psychology Service by progressively improving the ratio of EP to school to 1:4 in respect of public sector primary and secondary schools which admit a large number of students with special educational needs. As a result, the demand for EPs will increase gradually. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council if it knows:

(1) (i) the number of places, (ii) the number of graduates, (iii) the unit cost and (iv) the amount of subsidy, in respect of UGC-funded educational psychology programmes in each of the past five years;

(2) the criteria adopted by UGC for vetting and approval of funding applications from tertiary institutions for (i) running new master degree programmes and (ii) increasing the number of places of those programmes, as well as the procedures concerned; and

(3) whether UGC has received funding applications from the two aforesaid institutions for increasing the number of funded places of their master degree programmes in educational psychology; if UGC has, of the details; whether UGC will invite and provide funding to other tertiary institutions to run similar programmes; if UGC will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Kwok is as follows:

(1) The approved student intake and the number of graduates of the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded educational psychology programmes for 2012/13 to 2016/17 academic years are tabulated as follows:

Academic year	Approved student intake
2012/13	25
2013/14	15
2014/15	25
2015/16	15
2016/17	25

Year of graduation	Number of graduates
2013	12
2014	26

2015	15
2016	19
2017	12

Note: The above figures cover Master of Educational & Child Psychology programme offered by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Master of Social Sciences (Educational Psychology) programme offered by the University of Hong Kong.

Funding for individual UGC-funded programmes is subsumed under the block grant to universities without precise requirements by the UGC as to how it should be spent. Universities may allocate funds internally to programmes of various disciplines at different levels as they see fit. The UGC is therefore unable to identify or provide information about the actual subvention on specific programmes.

That said, the UGC has derived the average student unit cost of UGC-funded Taught Postgraduate (TPg) places, which are based on the actual costs incurred on UGC-funded expenditure items and reported by universities. The said average unit cost is not equivalent to the actual subvention or expenditure on specific TPg programmes. The average student unit costs of UGC-funded TPg places for the 2013/14 to 2017/18 academic years are as follows:

Academic year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Average student unit cost (\$)	202,000	215,000	230,000	232,000	Not yet available

Note: The bulk of the student unit cost of a TPg place is subsidised by Government subvention with the remainder funded by income from tuition fees (i.e. \$42,100 per student per year).

(2) and (3) The UGC and the UGC-funded universities conduct a planning exercise and recurrent grant assessment on a triennial basis. Proposals of launching new UGC-funded programmes or making changes to the number of intake places of existing programmes are usually raised by the UGC-funded universities in the context of the triennial planning exercise.

The planning exercise for 2019/20 to 2021/22 triennium is currently underway. Pursuant to the Government's advice on manpower requirements, the UGC-funded universities have submitted planning exercise proposals (PEPs) to the UGC. The UGC Sub-Group on Planning Exercise met with individual universities in May 2018 to exchange views on the PEP. Before making relevant recommendations to the Government, the UGC will fully consider the needs of society and the government's advice on manpower requirements. Later this year, the UGC will submit its recommendations on allocation of student places and the associated funding for the 2019/20 to 2021/22 triennium to the Government. The Government will announce the indicative student number

targets of the 2019/20 to 2021/22 triennium as and when appropriate.