

# RGC announces funding results of Areas of Excellence Scheme and Theme-based Research Scheme 2024/25

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The Research Grants Council (RGC) announced today (July 15) the funding results of the Areas of Excellence (AoE) Scheme 2024/25 (Twelfth Round) and the Theme-based Research Scheme (TRS) 2024/25 (Fourteenth Round).

Three AoE and seven TRS research proposals were awarded RGC funding totalling \$236 million and \$330 million respectively. The lists of the awarded projects are set out in Annexes I and II.

The Chairman of the RGC, Professor Timothy W. Tong, said, "I am delighted to announce the successful completion of the 2024/25 exercise. Under the AoE Scheme, three outstanding projects in the areas of diabetes care, surgical robots and artificial intelligence for geriatric care were selected for funding, after rigorous peer reviews based on academic and scientific merits. I would like to congratulate the three project teams for successfully securing the funding support to develop their cutting-edge research into areas of excellence.

"Under the TRS, the RGC decided to fund seven projects which are of strategic importance to Hong Kong's long-term development. These projects cover a wide range of research areas highly relevant to our daily lives, including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) control, hepatocellular carcinoma, resilience against extreme storm surges, wireless power transfer technologies, sustainable supply chain finance, multi-sensory emulation wearable devices, and social robots. I am confident that these projects will deliver enduring economic and societal impacts at the local, national and international levels.

"The RGC has been committed to promoting the University Grants Committee-funded universities in carrying out academic collaborative research. By providing annual funding through the AoE Scheme and the TRS, the RGC has been supporting universities in consolidating and putting into play their advantages, as well as pooling talent and resources. This would provide a strong foothold for developing Hong Kong into an international hub for post-secondary education, and contributing to the further enhancement of Hong Kong's research capacity and the vibrancy of our innovation ecosystem."

Professor Tong expressed his gratitude to the panel experts for their valuable contributions to the assessment process, as well as local researchers for their continued support for the AoE Scheme, the TRS and the RGC's work.

Details of the approved projects for the 2024/25 exercise are available on the RGC website (AoE Scheme: [www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding\\_opport/aoe/funded\\_research/aoe12.html](http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/aoe/funded_research/aoe12.html) and TRS: [www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding\\_opport/trs/funded\\_research/trs14.html](http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/trs/funded_research/trs14.html)) for reference. A call for proposals for the AoE Scheme and the TRS 2025/26 will be issued later this month.

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## **July 2024 issue of “Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics” now available**

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) published today (July 15) the July 2024 issue of the "Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics" (HKMDS).

Apart from providing up-to-date statistics, this issue also contains two feature articles entitled "Foreign Affiliates Statistics of Hong Kong" and "Trade between Hong Kong and the Mainland of China".

### "Foreign Affiliates Statistics of Hong Kong"

With globalisation of the world economy, it is popular for multinational enterprises to provide services to customers in another economy through setting up affiliated companies abroad.

In view of the importance of services supplied via this mode, the C&SD has developed a statistical framework for compiling relevant statistics, known as "foreign affiliates statistics (FATS)". This feature article briefly describes the statistical system for compiling inward FATS, and presents principal inward FATS of Hong Kong for 2022. It is an update of similar articles on the same subject published in preceding years.

For enquiries about this feature article, please contact the Trade in Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7410; email: [tis@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:tis@censtatd.gov.hk)).

### "Trade between Hong Kong and the Mainland of China"

Hong Kong has maintained a close trading relationship with the mainland of China (the Mainland) for many years. In the past decade, the Mainland was Hong Kong's largest destination of total exports and supplier of imports, on average accounting for 55.9% and 45.9% of Hong Kong's total exports and imports respectively.

This feature article analyses the performance and highlights the salient features of merchandise trade between Hong Kong and the Mainland during the period from 2014 to 2023.

For enquiries about this feature article, please contact the Trade Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 4914; email: [trade@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:trade@censtatd.gov.hk)).

Published in bilingual form, the HKMDS is a compact volume of official statistics containing about 130 tables. It collects up-to-date statistical series on various aspects of the social and economic situation of Hong Kong. Topics include population; labour; external trade; National Income and Balance of Payments; prices; business performance; energy; housing and property; government accounts, finance and insurance; and transport, communications and tourism. For selected key statistical items, over 20 charts depicting the annual trend in the past decade and quarterly or monthly trend in the recent two years are also available. Users can download the Digest at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1010002&scode=460](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1010002&scode=460)).

Enquiries about the contents of the Digest can be directed to the Statistical Information Dissemination Section (1) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 4738; email: [gen-enquiry@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:gen-enquiry@censtatd.gov.hk)).

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## **Effective Exchange Rate Index**

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, July 15, 2024 is 106.3 (up 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

â€‹The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, July 13, 2024 was 106.2 (down 0.2 against last Friday's index).

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## **Communications Authority press release**

The following is issued on behalf of the Communications Authority:

This press release summarises the decision of the Communications Authority (CA) following its 136th meeting held in July 2024.

Relaxation of requirement related to insertion of news updates in television programmes

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The CA decided to relax the requirement related to the display of non-programme material (Note 1) within programmes on domestic free television

programme services (free TV) and domestic pay television programme services (pay TV) so that individual licensees may, having regard to their production and scheduling needs, decide whether or not to insert news updates in their programmes.

In June 2024, the CA received an application from Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB) for a waiver to enable it to display news headlines (Note 2), in the form of superimposed text, for specified types of programmes (including current affairs programmes, documentaries, informative and infotainment programmes) on the Phoenix Hong Kong Channel. The CA notes that with the proliferation of instant information and increasing demand for such information, viewers should have been accustomed to the display of news headlines in the aforesaid types of programmes and that their viewing pleasure would not be affected. In view of the above, the CA approved TVB's application on the condition that the superimposition of news headlines would not affect the viewing pleasure of the viewers. The waiver is valid until further notice. The relaxation is also applicable to TVB's other programme channels as well as the other two free TV licensees (i.e. HK Television Entertainment Company Limited and i-CABLE HOY Limited) and the pay TV licensee (i.e. PCCW Media Limited) for the broadcast of the aforesaid types of programmes.

Note 1: Paragraph 1 of Chapter 8 of the Generic Code of Practice on Television Advertising Standards stipulates that unless otherwise permitted by the CA, non-programme material may be placed only at the beginning or end of a programme or in a natural break occurring therein. For the purpose of this code, "non-programme material" includes news headlines in the form of superimposed text within a programme (except news programme).

Note 2: The CA has previously approved TVB's application for a temporary waiver for the Phoenix Hong Kong Channel to display news headlines for specified types of programmes (including current affairs programmes, documentaries and informative programmes). The waiver is valid for a period of three months from April 22 to July 21, 2024.

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## **[EDB announces release of Primary Education Curriculum Guide \(2024\)](#)**

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (July 15) announced the release of the Primary Education Curriculum Guide (PECG) (2024) prepared by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) for schools' implementation in the 2024/25 school year with a view to further optimising the whole-school curriculum planning and promoting students' whole-person development.

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In line with the following major developments in education, the Ad Hoc

Committee on Primary Education Curriculum Guide (AHC) has further enriched the relevant contents of the PECG (2024), striving to better suit the needs of schools and students, and keep abreast of the times:

i¼§ Fostering values education: echoing the optimised 12 "Priority Values and Attitudes";

i¼§ Promoting patriotic education: enriching the recommendations related to patriotic education;

i¼§ Introducing primary humanities (PH) and Primary Science (PS): updating the suggested lesson time allocation for each Key Learning Area/subject and the flexible lesson time; and providing new examples of good use of learning time to tie in with the introduction of PH and PS in the 2025/26 school year; and

i¼§ Optimising the recommendations related to school assessment and assignment policies.

An EDB spokesman said, "In order to create more space for fostering the balanced physical and psychological development of students, the PECG (2024) specifically puts forward recommendations to optimise school assessment and assignment policies, such as giving appropriate self-learning tasks instead of written assignments during long holidays; avoiding arranging tests or examinations immediately after long holidays; arranging a tutorial session in the afternoon as far as possible; collecting views of stakeholders on the school assessment policy at least once per school year; and formulating a mechanism in school to co-ordinate the time arrangement of assessments as well as the amount of homework."

Since the release of the PECG (Pilot Version) in September 2022, the EDB has been collecting views from the sector and reviewing the piloting in schools through various channels, such as questionnaire surveys and onsite workshops. Schools generally agree with the updated Seven Learning Goals and have incorporated the major renewed emphases of the PECG into their whole-school curriculum planning according to their development priorities.

The EDB is very grateful to the CDC for their professional advice during the drafting process of the curriculum guide, and also for the contribution of the AHC under the CDC in updating the PECG as well as their participation in its promotion. The AHC has conducted an ongoing review during the piloting period, and further enriched the contents of the PECG to tie in with the latest developments of the country, society and education, striving to better suit the needs of schools and students and keep abreast of the times.

To promote the PECG, the EDB continues to develop diversified modes of resources, including the PECG video series, the "Little Seedling" comics series, the school resources packages, and featured articles in "Smart Parent Net". A new promotional video will be launched in the coming school year. The EDB will also keep on organising onsite workshops for teachers to support schools' implementation of the major renewed emphases of the PECG.

The PECG (2024) and related resources are available on the EDB webpage ([www.edb.gov.hk/pecg](http://www.edb.gov.hk/pecg)) for schools' reference and use.