

LCQ10: Vocational and professional education and training

Following is a question by Professor the Hon William Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (July 10):

Question:

The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address has proposed to work with the relevant Mainland authorities to take forward the arrangements for mutual recognition between Hong Kong and the Mainland of sub degree level qualifications and put such mutual recognition arrangements on trial for selected pilot areas. In addition, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) and Shenzhen Polytechnic University (SZPU) have co-organised joint dual award programmes (the Joint Programmes). The VTC also promotes the "One Examination, Multiple Certification" arrangement (the Arrangement) under which candidates only need to pass one common examination in order to have their qualifications recognised by Hong Kong, the Mainland, and international professional organisations. Regarding vocational and professional education and training (VPET), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the trial run of the aforesaid arrangements for mutual recognition of qualifications has kicked off; if so, of the pilot areas, and the sub-degree programmes which are related to VPET; of the planning for pilot areas in the next three years;

(2) whether it knows, in each of the past three years, (i) the titles of the programmes offered by the VTC which are related to the industries covered by the Arrangement, (ii) the number of candidates who successfully passed the relevant examinations under the Arrangement and obtained the relevant qualifications recognition, and (iii) the number of local candidates who worked in the Mainland through having their qualifications recognised by the Mainland under the Arrangement;

(3) whether it knows, in each of the past three years, (i) the titles of the Joint Programmes offered by the VTC, (ii) the number of students enrolled in such programmes and, among them, the number of those who successfully obtained higher diplomas from the VTC and professional diplomas and certificates from the Mainland;

(4) of the mechanism through which SZPU sends students to pursue studies in Hong Kong; whether the VTC has conducted survey on the interest of SZPU students towards pursuing studies in Hong Kong; if so, of the outcome; if not, whether it will consider conducting a survey on SZPU students' perceptions of the academic structure, tuition fees, accommodation, development prospects, etc. in Hong Kong, so as to facilitate the formulation of measures to attract them to pursue studies in Hong Kong; and

(5) whether it will establish post-secondary institutions specialising in offering VPET programmes mutually recognised by Hong Kong and the Mainland in the Northern Metropolis University Town?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been promoting the development of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) as a pathway parallel to conventional academic education. To this end, we adopt the strategy of fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development. This is also in line with the national strategies of strengthening vocational education in the modern era, by encouraging the articulation between vocational and academic studies, co-operation between industries and education, and the integration of science and education, with a view to nurturing higher quality talent with applied knowledge and skills to support the development of strategic industries and the economy.

Our reply to Professor the Hon William Wong's question is as follows:

(1) In line with the national policy of promoting the high-quality development of modernised vocational education, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been collaborating with the relevant Mainland authorities to take forward the mutual recognition of sub-degree level qualifications, including the Higher Diploma qualification. The HKSAR Government will continue to follow up on the relevant initiative.

(2) Under the "One Examination, Multiple Certification" (OEMC) system implemented by the Vocational Training Council (VTC), candidates may obtain relevant certificates issued by the Mainland, Hong Kong, and Macao by passing a standardised examination. The OEMC system is currently implemented in the beauty and hairdressing industries, with two levels of examinations available for each industry. For the beauty industry, upon satisfactory completion of the examination under the OEMC system, candidates are awarded the Certificate of Occupational Skill Level for beauticians on the Mainland, the Vocational Assessment Competency Certificate for the beauty industry in Hong Kong, and the Occupational Skills Certificate for beauticians in Macao. As for the hairdressing industry, candidates who complete the examination under the OEMC system are awarded the Certificate of Occupational Skill Level for hair stylists on the Mainland, the Vocational Assessment Competency Certificate for the hairdressing industry in Hong Kong, and the Occupational Skills Certificate for hair stylists in Macao. The OEMC system operates as an independent examination and is not tied to any particular programmes. The numbers of candidates who obtained certificates under the OEMC system in the past three years are as follows:

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
100	125	154

Remarks: The VTC does not maintain statistics on the number of candidates working on the Mainland after obtaining certificates under the OEMC system.

(3) and (4) The VTC and the Shenzhen Polytechnic University (SPU) have reached agreement on five collaborative programmes, allowing VTC students to attend these programmes at SPU, while the SPU has not yet arranged its students to study the VTC's programmes in Hong Kong. In particular, three Higher Diploma (HD) programmes, namely Electrical Engineering (Electrical Services), Building Services Engineering, as well as Games and Animation, have been successfully launched. In the 2024/25 academic year (AY), the VTC and the SPU plan to launch two other programmes in Fashion Design as well as Hotel and Catering Management.

From the 2021/22 to 2023/24 AYs, a total of 73 the VTC students of HD programmes in Electrical Engineering (Electrical Services), Building Services Engineering, and Games and Animation attended the collaborative programmes at SPU. Among them, 53 students successfully obtained qualifications from both institutions.

In relation to attracting non-local vocational and professional talent, the Government introduced the Vocational Professionals Admission Scheme (VPAS) in 2023. Under the pilot initiative, non-local students (including those from the Mainland as well as other countries and regions) enrolled in designated full-time HD programmes of the VTC in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 AYs will be eligible for applying to stay in Hong Kong for one year after graduation to seek employment in trades relevant to their studies, with a view to alleviating the manpower shortage in skilled trades. In this connection, the VTC is proactively recruiting non-local students and will be providing comprehensive support in areas such as accommodation, language and communication, living in Hong Kong, and career development, in order to attract students to study in Hong Kong.

(5) The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address announces that the Government will endeavour to develop a Northern Metropolis University Town (NMUT) in the Northern Metropolis (NM), where post-secondary institutions are encouraged to strengthen co-operation with renowned Mainland and overseas institutions, and enhance synergy through sharing resources and enhancing collaboration with the industry sector in the area. To support the development of NMUT, the Government will reserve more than 60 hectares of sites in the area for post-secondary education development use.

Based on our preliminary idea, we will gradually take forward the relevant work, having regard to a series of objectives and strategies, including following an "industry-led" principle. We hope that the post-secondary education development in NM could suitably tie in with the different positionings of individual districts, promoting diversified development in collaboration with industries and strengthening synergy. In particular, we will consider proactively promoting VPET development in NMUT, facilitating co-operation between industries and education and integration of science and education, and supporting institutions to strengthen links and collaboration with industries in the area. Through incorporating enriched internship and work-based learning opportunities in programmes, institutions

could nurture professional skilled talent with applied abilities to cater to the keen manpower needs of various sectors, adding impetus to the industry development in the area.

The Education Bureau (EDB) has introduced the post-secondary education sites in NM to post-secondary institutions and consulted the institutions on their preliminary development intentions and proposals. The EDB is currently comprehensively considering the proposals and collating the information submitted by the institutions. In accordance with the abovementioned objectives and strategies, we will closely communicate with institutions which are interested in the development of the NM, with a view to taking forward the development of NMUT in phases.

[Missing woman in Tin Shui Wai located](#)

A woman who went missing in Tin Shui Wai has been located.

Lai Mei-lin Elza, aged 57, went missing after she was last seen in Mong Tseng Tsuen on July 4 morning. Her family made a report to Police on July 7.

The woman returned to her residence last evening (July 9). She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

[Speech by CS at Fire Asia 2024 \(English only\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at Fire Asia 2024 today (July 10):

Secretary-General Wang Songmiao (Secretary-General of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Deputy Director-General Luo Yongqiang (Deputy Director General of National Fire and Rescue Administration of People's Republic of China), Deputy Commissioner Fang Jianming (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR), Deputy President Wu Lizhi (Deputy President, China People's Police University), Deputy Director Xie Zhixiang (Deputy Director of the Bureau of Liaison of the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

â€‹Good morning. Welcome to Fire Asia 2024 and to Hong Kong! I am delighted to see so many experts in fire and emergency management gathered here from around the globe.

Indeed, some 600 professionals, including fire engineering experts, emergency responders, paramedics and other medical specialists, are joining this year's three-day conference.

They also include, let me add, delegations from a number of Belt and Road and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries. Your presence underlines our shared commitment to making the world a safer place for us all.

The past few years have presented us with overwhelming challenges, including the pandemic, climate change, and the increasing complexity of emergency response.

Yet, in the face of adversity, we have witnessed the remarkable resilience, and innovative spirit, of many economies worldwide. Through this year's three-day conference, we have a golden opportunity to build on this good momentum.

Emergency preparedness is essential to protecting an economy and its people from the impact of wide-ranging disasters, crises and other emergencies. An effective emergency management system helps mitigate disruptions to essential services, economic stability and social order.

In today's interconnected world, the threats of emergencies and disasters could be cross-border by nature. Regional and international teamwork plays an important role in reducing risks and enhancing resilience.

To that end, just last month, the Hong Kong SAR Government, together with the governments of Guangdong Province and Macao SAR, signed the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Emergency Management Co-operation and Greater Bay Area Emergency Response Operation Co-operation Framework Agreement.

Under this framework, we are setting up a government-led co-operation mechanism for emergency response, enhancing our ability to cope with accidents, natural disasters and other crises that affect Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

At the same time, we are establishing a task force later this year. It will review our co-operation experience to develop a long-term emergency-management plan for the Greater Bay Area as a whole.

No less important, the Belt and Road and ASEAN also present ample opportunities for regional and global collaboration.

The Belt and Road's extensive infrastructure networks – from roads and railways to ports and much more – can enable the rapid deployment of

emergency response personnel and resources across borders during crises.

And the institutional mechanisms within ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Co-ordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance, allow member states to share information and co-ordinate responses.

Through all these and other regional initiatives, economies enhance their collective ability to respond effectively to emergencies that cross national boundaries.

Our speakers from Belt and Road and ASEAN countries will, for sure, broaden our perspectives on effective emergency management strategies across regions.

I have every confidence that, drawing on the collective expertise of all our high-profile speakers, we will move on from this conference safer, better prepared, and better protected, for whatever comes our way.

During your stay in Hong Kong, I urge you, as well, to find time for leisure. Our city, as the mega-events capital of Asia, is hosting more than 200 events this year – one every two days in the second half of the year.

Our city is also blessed with a wide variety of Michelin star restaurants, world-class coastal walks, beautiful country parks, and all sorts of arts, culture and entertainment you can easily find.

Hong Kong, after all, is rising as the world's East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. In short, enjoy yourself!

My thanks to the organisers of this year's Fire Asia, namely the Institution of Fire Engineers (Hong Kong Branch), the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (Building Services Division and Fire Division), the China Hong Kong Ambulance Service Institute, and the China Hong Kong Fire Protection Association.

I am grateful, as well, to The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for its generous support.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a rewarding conference and a memorable stay in Hong Kong. Thank you very much.

LCQ19: Parent education

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (July 10):

Question:

There are views that, in comparison with school education, family education is equally or even more important for the learning and growth of school children, but not every parent knows how to properly and effectively teach their children. In addition, it is learnt that while at present the Government relies primarily on the Education Bureau (EDB) to promote parent education, and EDB has adopted the approach of regarding "schools as a primary platform and the community as a complementary" in implementing parent education, schools differ in terms of motivation, effectiveness and content focus in the promotion of parent education. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the policy measures introduced and amount of resources allocated by the Government in recent years for the promotion of parent education; among such policy measures, of the respective numbers of those implemented through schools, other non-school organisations, and directly by government departments;

(2) regarding the implementation of parent education by primary and secondary schools, how the authorities monitor the relevant quantity, quality, and effectiveness;

(3) whether it has compiled statistics on the participation rates in parent education provided by primary and secondary schools across the territory, and the number of parents of school-age students who have never taken part in any parent education in the past five years; of its plans in place to increase the participation rates of such parents;

(4) apart from written circulars and the Parents' Day normally held once every academic year, whether the Government will encourage schools to maintain communication and contact with parents through more frequent and diversified modes in respect of the learning and growth of students, including making good use of communication technologies such as video conferencing; and

(5) as it is learnt that some primary and secondary schools have provided national security education to parents through talks and other means in recent years, of the number of such activities and the participation rates of parents; whether the Government will further step up the relevant work, including enhancing the contents, frequencies and participation rates of such activities, as well as providing more assistance to schools and related organisations, so as to raise parents' sense of national identity and awareness of patriotism?

Reply:

President,

Parents are the pivotal figures in nurturing, safeguarding and educating

children, playing crucial roles in supporting children's development and learning as well as fostering their proper values, positive attitude and behaviour. Therefore, the Government has long been promoting parent education through the Education Bureau (EDB) and other government bureaux.

Having consulted the Health Bureau, the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Tony Tse is as follows:

(1) The EDB has all along been adopting the approaches of "parent-based" and "schools as a primary platform and the community as a complementary" to promote parent education through diversified means. To enable parents to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for nurturing their children in a more systematic manner, the EDB commissioned a post-secondary institution to develop the curriculum frameworks on parent education for parents of students at different learning stages. The EDB introduced the Curriculum Frameworks on Parent Education for kindergarten (KG), primary school and secondary school in 2021, 2022 and May 2024 respectively (collaboratively named as the "Curriculum Frameworks"). All the Curriculum Frameworks have been uploaded onto the EDB's website for schools' and relevant organisations' reference.

At school level, the EDB provided KGs joining the Kindergarten Education Scheme with an additional one-off subsidy of \$90,000 to \$100,000 in the 2021/22 school year, and a one-off grant on parent education of \$200,000 for all publicly-funded primary and secondary schools in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years respectively to support schools to embark on structured school-based parent education programmes or activities having regard to the Curriculum Frameworks and the needs of parents and students. Besides, all public-sector schools have set up Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and the Committee on Home-School Co-operation has been assisting the Government in providing the "Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities" and the "Subsidy for Joint Home-School Co-operation Project" for PTAs, encouraging PTAs to organise diversified school-based home-school co-operation and parent education activities or programmes with reference to the Curriculum Frameworks. To further enhance the support for schools, starting from the 2023/24 school year, the EDB has developed resource packages for primary and secondary schools based on the Curriculum Frameworks in phases to facilitate teachers, social workers and guidance personnel of schools in mastering the relevant knowledge and skills.

At territory level, starting from the 2018/19 school year, the EDB has commissioned post-secondary institutions and non-governmental organisations to organise territory-wide or district-based parent education courses and talks for parents and grandparents of KG and primary students with reference to the Curriculum Frameworks, and produce electronic learning resources to facilitate parents' self-learning. The EDB has also been implementing the territory-wide Positive Parent Campaign (the Campaign) since 2020 to promote parent education through extensive and diversified channels, with a view to fostering positive thinking, strategies and attitudes in nurturing children among parents. In recent years, we have organised various parent education activities and produced a theme song for the Campaign, Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio as well as animations and short

videos on parent education to further enhance public awareness on positive parent education. We have also reached out to parents of different backgrounds in the communities to promote the messages of positive parenting through a moving showroom, parent-oriented websites, advertisements at MTR stations and on bus body, online platforms, etc.

Besides, the EDB has been making use of the one-stop parent education website "Smart Parent Net" (www.parent.edu.hk/en), "Smart Parent Net" Facebook, Instagram pages and YouTube channel to disseminate important information on supporting the physical and psychological development of students, which includes information on parent-child relationship, parenting skills and emotional management of parents.

From the 2020-21 to 2023-24 financial years, the EDB's expenditure on promoting home-school co-operation and parent education is about \$550 million.

Apart from the EDB, the Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) administered by the Family Health Service of the Department of Health also provide a Parenting Programme for parents of children up to five years old, which aims to enhance parents' understanding of their children's growth and development. The Parenting Programme consists of two components – a universal Parenting Programme and an intensive Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P Programme). The universal Parenting Programme provides individual counselling as well as public health talks and workshops on parenting. During the above individual parenting counselling, healthcare professionals will encourage parents to participate in the Triple P Programme if they notice that the child has early signs of behavioural problems or if the parents encounter difficulties in parenting. The Triple P Programme is a structured parenting programme which aims to increase parents' confidence in parenting and improve their parenting skills. The programme is conducted by accredited facilitators and offered in the MCHCs in various districts. The programme covers the principles of positive parenting and helps parents to use positive communication skills and effective parenting methods to handle children's behavioural problems in a way that does not harm the child's self-esteem.

(2) to (3) Currently, all public-sector schools have set up PTAs. The EDB also encourages schools to plan and organise systematic school-based parent education programmes with reference to the Curriculum Frameworks and constantly evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes. The EDB have all along been regularly reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of the work of schools (including home-school co-operation and parent education) through inspections, school visits, etc, and providing feedback to schools in a timely manner to facilitate continuous development of schools. Publicly-funded schools are also required to draw up an implementation plan and report on the use of the One-off Grant on Parent Education, setting out the details of the subsidised items or activities, relevant expenses and the evaluations for submission to the School Management Committee/ Management Committee/ Incorporated Management Committee for endorsement.

Besides, the EDB has been requesting the PTAs of schools and the

Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations (FPTAs) to submit an assessment report for evaluation of each activity supported by the relevant subsidies on home-school co-operation activities. The EDB also collects opinions from schools and parents through different means to continuously review the effectiveness of the measures implemented. In the 2023/24 school year, about 1 650 schools applied for these subsidies and approval was granted for subsidising around 3 690 activities.

(4) The EDB has been encouraging schools to maintain communication and collaboration with parents through diversified modes and channels so as to facilitate students' learning and development. In general, schools would assist parents to support the whole-person development of children through the PTA activities, Parents' Day, Parents' Night, school publications, e-circulars, school website, groups of the mobile messaging applications, etc. Besides, some schools would make flexible arrangements for meeting and communicating with parents, such as online meetings, to cater for the needs of working parents. Schools may also provide online portals where parents can easily access information to keep track of their children's academic progress and school activities at their convenience. Schools would in general encourage parents' participation through activities related to students' development and learning at school level, grade/form level or class level.

(5) The EDB has been encouraging parents to learn more about the National Security Law, proactively partner with schools and strengthen their collaboration with teachers, with a view to enhancing students' awareness of safeguarding national security and abiding by the law. To strengthen national education, all publicly-funded schools are required to organise one or more activities relating to national education for parents every year from the 2022/23 school year onwards. The EDB continuously monitors and supports schools on the implementation of related measures through channels such as school visits and daily communications with schools, and makes suggestions for enhancement and improvement in accordance with school-based circumstances. Primary and secondary schools continue to organise different kinds of parent-child activities related to Chinese culture and national security education regularly, such as Chinese Culture Day, visits to the Hong Kong Palace Museum, Jao Tsung-I Academy and the Patriotic Education Centre, publications for parents and related exhibition boards in the school campuses, to help parents understand the importance of safeguarding national security. In addition, schools would invite guest speakers, such as representatives of the Hong Kong deputies to the National People's Congress, to give talks in the parent seminars at schools with a view to deepening parents' understanding of national security education and their role in supporting schools' implementation of national security education.

Apart from the above, the EDB provides subsidies for PTAs of schools and FPTAs, encouraging them to organise activities on national education and national security education. From the 2021/22 to 2023/24 school years, the EDB has approved more than 2 390 applications from PTAs and 14 applications from FPTAs to support the provision of programmes or activities related to national education, national security education and values education, including school cultural exchange tours to the Mainland and local parent-

child national education tours. About 64 000 parents have participated in such activities.

LD reminds employers and employees to take heat stroke preventive measures in times of Heat Stress at Work Warning

As the Heat Stress at Work Warning is now in effect, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and employees to take appropriate measures during the effective period of the warning to prevent heat stroke when working in hot weather or hot environments.

Employees who work outdoors or in non-air-conditioned indoor environments face high levels of heat stress and are at a relatively higher risk of heat stroke. Employers should assess the risk factors of heat stress for employees at work and, based on the identified risk factors, take necessary preventive and control measures, including rescheduling work periods, setting up shading covers, providing ventilation and heat dissipation equipment, and reminding employees to replenish water and rest in a timely manner.

The Heat Stress at Work Warning is formulated by the LD based on the Hong Kong Heat Index. There are three levels of the warning: Amber, Red and Black, which help employers and employees better understand the level of heat stress while working outdoors or indoors without air-conditioning systems.

A spokesman for the LD said that when the department issues the Heat Stress at Work Warning, employers must refer to the criteria and recommendations provided in the "[Guidance Notes on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work](#)" to conduct risk assessments, according to the workloads and other relevant heat stress risk factors, for employees who work outdoors or in non-air-conditioned indoor workplaces. Appropriate rest breaks should be arranged every hour, as far as reasonably practicable, based on various levels of the Heat Stress at Work Warning, to reduce employees' risk of heat stroke.

Employees must also follow instructions to rest on time. Whenever there are any symptoms of heat-related illnesses, such as headache, dizziness, thirst, and nausea, they should rest in a cool and shady place, drink water, and inform employers/supervisors to take appropriate action immediately.

The LD issued the "Guidance Notes on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work", detailing the various risk factors that should be considered when conducting

heat stress risk assessments and recommending corresponding control measures for identified risk factors for employers' and employees' reference. For the Heat Stress at Work Warning and related guidelines, please refer to the department's thematic webpage:

www.labour.gov.hk/eng/news/prevention_of_heat_stroke_at_work.htm.