

Subsidy amount for Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong in 2020/21 academic year announced

The Government announced today (December 12) that the subsidy amount of the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong (NMTSS) in the 2020/21 academic year will be adjusted upwards in accordance with the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index. The annual subsidy amount of the NMTSS will be increased from \$31,300 in the current academic year to \$32,100.

The adjusted subsidy amount applies to both new and continuing students meeting the eligibility criteria. The subsidy is tenable for the normal duration of the programmes concerned. Eligible students enrolling in the relevant programmes only need to pay a tuition fee less the subsidy amount. Students in need may still apply for student financial assistance from the Student Finance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency in respect of the actual tuition fee payable.

The NMTSS was one of the priority measures announced by the Chief Executive in July 2017 to support quality education. Since the 2017/18 academic year, a non-means-tested annual subsidy has been provided to Hong Kong students meeting the following eligibility criteria:

(a) attaining "3322" in the Hong Kong Diploma for Secondary Education Examination (i.e. level 3 for Chinese Language and English Language and level 2 for Mathematics Compulsory Part and Liberal Studies) when enrolling in eligible self-financing first-year-first-degree programmes; or

(b) attaining sub-degree qualifications (i.e. after completing the locally accredited sub-degree programmes in relevant disciplines) when enrolling in eligible self-financing top-up degree programmes.

In the 2020/21 academic year, the NMTSS will cover the eligible full-time self-financing locally accredited local and non-local first-year-first-degree and top-up degree programmes offered by 17 institutions. A list of the relevant institutions and programmes for the 2020/21 cohort is at the Annex. The subsidy applies to all eligible students enrolling in the programmes covered by the NMTSS. Applications for the subsidy need to be made through the institutions concerned. For details, please visit: www.cspe.edu.hk/nmtss.

LegCo Public Accounts Committee to hold public hearing tomorrow

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will hold a public hearing on "Provision of consultancy, research and development and training services by the Hong Kong Productivity Council" (Chapter 2) of the Director of Audit's Report No.73 at 9am tomorrow (December 13) in Conference Room 3 of the LegCo Complex.

Seven witnesses have been invited to appear before the above hearing to respond to points raised in the Report and answer questions asked by PAC members.

The programme for the public hearing is as follows:

Date: December 13 (Friday)

Time: 9am

Venue: Conference Room 3

Subject: Provision of consultancy, research and development and training services by the Hong Kong Productivity Council
(Chapter 2 of the Director of Audit's Report No.73)

Witnesses:

Secretary for Innovation and Technology
Mr Nicholas W Yang

Permanent Secretary for Innovation and Technology
Ms Annie Choi

Commissioner for Innovation and Technology
Ms Rebecca Pun

Deputy Commissioner for Innovation and Technology
Mr Ivan Lee

Executive Director, Hong Kong Productivity Council
Mr Mohamed D Butt

Chief Innovation Officer, Hong Kong Productivity Council
Dr Lawrence Cheung

Chief Financial Officer, Hong Kong Productivity Council
Ms Vivian Lin

PAC is chaired by Mr Abraham Shek, and its Deputy Chairman is Mr Kenneth Leung. Other members include Mr Paul Tse, Mr Steven Ho, Mr Lam Cheuk-ting, Mr

First meeting of Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Environmental Protection and Combating Climate Change held in Guangzhou

The Secretary for the Environment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Mr Wong Kam-sing, and the Director-General of the Department of Ecology and Environment of Guangdong Province (GDDEE), Mr Lu Xiulu, today (December 12) co-chaired the first meeting of the Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Environmental Protection and Combating Climate Change (JWGEPCCC) in Guangzhou. The meeting reviewed the progress of collaboration between the two sides in 2019, and agreed on a work plan for 2020.

The JWGEPCCC was formed by the merger of the former Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection and the former Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Liaison Group on Combating Climate Change.

In the past year, there has been smooth progress in collaboration between Hong Kong and Guangdong on various fronts including improving the air quality in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, protecting the water environment and enhancing co-operation in forestry and marine resources conservation as well as combating climate change (as detailed in Annex 1).

On improving air quality, under the PRD Regional Air Quality Management Plan, Hong Kong and Guangdong are implementing various measures and are monitoring their progress and effectiveness to meet the emission reduction targets for 2020. Both sides agreed to include the monitoring of ambient volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the PRD Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network and have started preparatory work. Hong Kong and Guangdong also launched a study on post-2020 regional air pollutant emission reduction targets and concentration levels (the Study).

On marine environment management, the trial of the Notification and Alert System on Marine Refuse has been functioning well since its debut in 2017. So far, it has been activated 18 times with notifications issued in response to heavy rainfall, flooding and other major environmental incidents, which enabled relevant government departments to take timely clean-up actions as required. In addition, the two sides jointly organised for the first time coastal clean-up activities this year to promote the message of keeping shorelines clean and joining hands in protecting the ocean.

The JWGEPCCC also endorsed the work plan for 2020 (as detailed in Annex 2). In addition to formulating the post-2020 regional air pollutant emission measures and targets, and predicting the expected air quality levels through the Study, Hong Kong and Guangdong will include ambient VOCs in their routine monitoring to step up regional ozone control. The two sides will strengthen the collaboration on air quality forecasting for improving the forecasting capability of the PRD region. The two sides will also jointly explore technologies and measures to monitor marine refuse and tackle marine environmental incidents, with a view to further extending the co-operation among neighbouring cities in the region.

As regards the ecological environment, Hong Kong and Guangdong will foster in-depth exchanges and enhance collaboration in the development, management, conservation, staff training, publicity and education of nature reserves including forests and wetlands.

Officials of the Government of the HKSAR attending today's meeting included representatives of the Environment Bureau, the Development Bureau, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Buildings Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Department of Health, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, the Environmental Protection Department, the Hong Kong Observatory, the Transport Department and the Water Supplies Department. Officials of the Guangdong side included representatives of the GDDEE, the Guangdong Provincial Development and Reform Commission, the Department of Industry and Information Technology of Guangdong Province, the Department of Science and Technology of Guangdong Province, the Department of Natural Resources of Guangdong Province, the Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Guangdong Province, the Department of Transportation of Guangdong Province, the Water Resources Department of Guangdong Province, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of Guangdong Province, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Administration for Market Regulation, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Meteorological Service, the Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration, the Guangdong Academy of Sciences (Chinese Academy of Sciences Guangzhou Branch), the Environmental Monitoring Center of Guangdong Province, the Ecological and Environmental Bureau of Shenzhen and the Ecological and Environmental Bureau of Zhuhai. The JWGEPCCC mainly discusses and exchanges views on matters relating to environmental quality, natural resources, ecological environment, sustainable development and combating climate change of the two sides. Eight special panels have been set up under the JWGEPCCC to take forward the implementation of the co-operation initiatives.

LegCo committee meetings

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) House Committee will hold a special meeting at 2.30pm tomorrow (December 13) in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex to continue the election of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the House Committee for the 2019-2020 session.

The meeting of the LegCo Finance Committee (FC) originally scheduled at 3pm tomorrow in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex will be held at 4pm, whereas the FC meeting at 8.45am tomorrow will be held as scheduled.

Red flags hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 12) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.