

Four degree programmes selected for Pilot Project on the Development of Applied Degree Programmes

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (June 28) announced that four degree programmes have been selected for the Pilot Project on the Development of Applied Degree Programmes.

The EDB launched the Pilot Project in December 2020 to gain experience in the practical issues involved in the development of applied degree programmes and to assess the implications for the higher education system as a whole. Having assessed the proposals submitted by eligible self-financing post-secondary institutions, the EDB has selected the following four degree programmes for the Pilot Project:

- (a) Bachelor of Nursing (Honours) programme by Caritas Institute of Higher Education;
- (b) Bachelor of Engineering with Honours in Testing and Certification programme by The Open University of Hong Kong;
- (c) Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Horticulture, Arboriculture and Landscape Management programme by the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong of the Vocational Training Council; and
- (d) Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Applied Gerontology programme by Tung Wah College.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The selected institutions will develop applied degree programmes by modifying the programme structure and curriculum of these existing programmes, which have strong industry elements and are in disciplines with keen manpower demand. The EDB has engaged the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications to assist the institutions in the development of the applied degree programmes. Subject to the satisfactory completion of relevant accreditation, the institutions will launch the applied degree programmes in the 2022/23 academic year at the earliest."

The Pilot Project was launched in pursuance of a recommendation made by the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET), which was established by the Government in 2018 to review and consider enhancements to the promotion of VPET in Hong Kong with a more targeted approach. The Task Force, chaired by Dr Roy Chung, submitted its review report to the Government in 2020, recommending among others the development of applied degrees in Hong Kong with an applied focus.

The spokesman added, "The applied degree programmes to be developed

under the Pilot Project will have the following distinct and prominent features that would differentiate them from other degree programmes:

(a) the qualifications will be equivalent to those of conventional academic degrees (i.e. to be pitched at Qualifications Framework Level 5);

(b) generally speaking, a more flexible admission requirement will be adopted. Apart from academic results, other relevant factors will also be considered;

(c) the programmes will have an applied focus blending theory and practice, provide substantial internships and work-based learning experience, and prepare graduates for a specific trade/industry, though they can also support articulation to other qualifications; and

(d) there will be strong industry involvement in the programme development with trade recognition."