

LCQ12: Facilitating development of textiles and clothing industry

Following is a question by the Hon Lam Chun-sing and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (May 4):

Question:

It is learnt that the Clothing Industry Training Authority (CITA) has been proactively promoting sustainable fashion and nurturing talents in recent years, with a view to looking for opportunities for change for the textiles and clothing industry which is in gradual decline. On facilitating the development of the textiles and clothing industry, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the number and percentage of graduates of the CITA's full-time "Higher Diploma in Digital Fashion Creation" programme who progressed to university degree programmes in each of the past three years; whether the authorities will consider increasing the places of university degree programmes in textiles and fashion design; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it knows (i) the number of textiles and fashion enterprises and the number of their employees, (ii) the number of graduates of programmes relating to fashion design and apparel technology, and (iii) the number of students who were successfully referred by the CITA to enter the textiles and fashion industry, in each of the past three years;

(3) of the measures adopted by the authorities for developing sustainable fashion in the past three years, and the relevant measures in the coming three years; whether they will consider enhancing the technological or eco-friendly elements in fashion design programmes, so as to strengthen the training of talents; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it knows how the CITA nurtures scientific research talents for promoting the development of "re-industrialization" in the textiles and clothing industry, including whether it will consider collaborating with the industry and emerging innovation and technology enterprises to organise diversified on-the-job training programmes?

Reply:

President,

The Clothing Industry Training Authority (CITA) was established in 1975 under the Industrial Training (Clothing Industry) Ordinance to provide training courses for the clothing industry, and to assist in the placement of persons who have completed training courses. Having consulted the Commerce

and Economic Development Bureau, the Education Bureau, the Environment Bureau and the Innovation and Technology Bureau, my consolidated reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) The CITA and the Li Ka Shing School of Professional and Continuing Education of the Hong Kong Metropolitan University jointly launched the "Higher Diploma in Digital Fashion Creation" programme in 2019. Five learners in the first cohort graduated in 2021, of whom three continued studies in local universities, accounting for 60 per cent. As learners admitted in 2020 and 2021 have not graduated, the relevant figures are not yet available.

Under the current triennial planning mechanism for University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities, universities enjoy substantial autonomy to flexibly deploy their recurrent grants, allocated in form of a block grant, to determine the programmes to be offered and allocation of student places to textiles and fashion design or other various disciplines (except education and healthcare disciplines). Under the principle of institutional autonomy, self-financing post-secondary institutions also have the flexibility to develop programmes that meet market needs and adjust the allocated student places to different disciplines.

(2) According to the latest information by the Census and Statistics Department, the information on establishments and persons engaged in the textiles and wearing apparel industry from 2018 to 2020 is tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of establishments	Number of persons engaged
2018	650	4 910
2019	640	4 560
2020	600	4 400

Note 1: The above figures are rounded to the nearest ten.

The number of graduates of programmes related to the fashion and apparel technology in the past three academic years (2018-19 to 2020-21) is as follows:

Course category	Number of graduates		
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Programmes funded by the UGC	661	535	591
Full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree and undergraduate programmes	287	241	Note 2

Higher Diploma and in-service training programmes of the Vocational Training Council	534	453	572
Courses of the CITA	1 195	970	1 929

Note 2: Relevant figure not yet available pending provision by relevant self-financing post-secondary institutions.

Most of the courses by the CITA are part-time courses for in-service practitioners to acquire the latest skills. The CITA provides placement services for graduates of its full-time courses by referring them to job vacancies offered by employers. The CITA has not tracked all cases, and thus does not maintain figures of learners who have joined the industry.

(3) To promote development of sustainable fashion, the Government provides funding support through the CreateSmart Initiative for the fashion design industry to organise and participate in different projects, for example, the "Fashion Summit (HK) 2021" seminars and the "Redress Design Award". The Government will continue to provide funding support to relevant projects to further enhance the understanding of the industry and the public on sustainable fashion.

To align with the industry's development trends, the CITA in recent years has been providing multiple courses of fashion design related to application of technology and sustainable development, such as 3D fashion design, digital pattern making, virtual fitting and production of virtual fashion shows, as well as practising sustainable development in fashion design, production management and marketing, with a view to enhancing learners' professional knowledge and practical skills. In addition, the Hong Kong Design Institute of the Vocational Training Council has incorporated technology and green elements into its "Higher Diploma in Fashion Design" programme and provided new appliances and equipment to strengthen students' training on using the latest technologies of the industry.

(4) The CITA has conducted various projects in recent years supporting the re-industrialisation of local textiles and clothing industry and enhancing the incorporation of technology element. The 2019 project of "To establish a re-industrialisation technology roadmap for small and medium-sized enterprises of the Hong Kong Textile and Fashion Industry" studied the global trends of textiles materials development and technological application, and provided concrete recommendations for the local textiles and apparel industry. The 2021 project of "Prime Cooling System in Garment" conducted research and developed cost-effective cooling fabrics in collaboration with a fabric supplier. The CITA also plans to offer courses on electronic commerce and online sales to help small and medium-sized enterprises upgrade, and will explore collaboration with appropriate enterprises and industrial organisations.