

LCQ15: Evening secondary courses

Following is a question by the Hon Ho Kai-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

The Government currently provides, through the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses (FAEAEC), financial assistance for adult students taking evening secondary courses offered by approved course providers. Eligible students may receive 30%, 50% or 100% reimbursement of the tuition fees paid. Students who are unable to pay tuition fees in advance due to financial difficulties may apply for loans under the Extended Non-Means-Tested Loan Scheme (ENLS) to settle tuition fees. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of students at various grades taking evening secondary courses under FAEAEC, in each of the past five years;
- (2) of the number of evening secondary students taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination and, among them, the number of those whose examination results met the general entrance requirements for subsidised undergraduate programmes, in each of the past five years;
- (3) of the respective numbers of students whose applications made under FAEAEC were received and approved in each of the past five years; in respect of the number of students whose applications were approved, (i) a breakdown by the percentage of tuition fees reimbursed and (ii) its percentage in the total number of evening secondary students;
- (4) of the number of eligible students applying for loans under ENLS, in each of the past five years;
- (5) of the current average annual tuition fee of the evening secondary courses offered under FAEAEC; as the Government has implemented for years free day secondary education, whether the Government will implement free evening secondary education;
- (6) given that evening secondary students have to compete with day secondary students for admission to subsidised undergraduate programmes, but support in the areas of finance and learning, etc. provided by the Government for the former is less than that for the latter, whether the Government will relax the eligibility criteria of the various subsidy schemes set up for the latter so as to cover the former, and launch scholarship and bursary schemes for the former to encourage them to study; and
- (7) whether it will comprehensively review and strengthen the support provided for evening secondary students, with a view to encouraging people

with low educational attainment to complete secondary education programme while working at the same time?

Reply:

President,

The Government launched the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses (FAEAEC) in 2005/06 school year with the aim of providing an affordable pathway to facilitate adult learners to complete mainstream secondary school courses and helping those learners with financial difficulties pursue their studies.

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Ho Kai-ming is as follows:

(1) The respective numbers of learners at various grades taking courses offered by evening secondary schools participating in the FAEAEC from the 2014/15 to 2018/19 school years are as follows:

School year	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
2014/15	58	53	105	455	476	589
2015/16	54	62	112	354	446	525
2016/17	56	54	103	338	428	423
2017/18	41	46	108	362	429	440
2018/19#	46	47	114	352	433	465

Note: The figures refer to the respective numbers of learners at various grades as at June 30 of the school years concerned, including those who have withdrawn from the courses.

The figures in the 2018/19 school year refer to the numbers of learners as at April 30, 2019, including those who have withdrawn from the courses.

(2) According to the information provided by the approved course providers participating in the FAEAEC, the respective numbers of evening secondary learners taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) through these providers in the 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years are tabulated as follows:

School year	Number of evening secondary learners taking the HKDSE through the approved course providers
2016/17	255
2017/18	261
2018/19	366

Note: Since not all approved course providers can provide relevant information on the period before the 2016/17 school year, we can only provide the figures regarding the past three school years.

The Education Bureau (EDB) does not maintain information on the examination results of evening secondary learners who took the HKDSE.

(3) The FAEAEC aims to reduce the financial burden on adult learners and provide incentives to encourage them to complete the courses. Under the FAEAEC, adult learners who are enrolled in junior and senior secondary courses provided by approved course providers and who meet the eligibility criteria are eligible for 30% reimbursement of the tuition fees, irrespective of their financial situation. To assist those with financial difficulties, full reimbursement or half reimbursement of the tuition fees are provided for eligible learners who are assessed to be eligible for full grant or half grant respectively in the means test administered by the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency (WFSFAA). The Student Finance Office of the WFSFAA processes the reimbursement of tuition fees based on the institutions' information on the number of eligible learners under the FAEAEC and other relevant information. The information on the reimbursement of tuition fees to learners under the FAEAEC in the past five school years is tabulated as follows:

School year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19@
Total number of learners	1 736	1 553	1 402	1 426	1 457
Total number of learners with tuition fee reimbursement (As a percentage of the total number of learners)	765 (44.1%)	751 (48.4%)	631 (45.0%)	640* (44.9%)	537 (36.9%)
Number of learners broken down by percentage of tuition fee reimbursement (As a percentage of the total number of learners):					
(a) Full reimbursement	240 (13.8%)	206 (13.3%)	164 (11.7%)	157 (11.0%)	121 (8.3%)
(b) Half reimbursement	90 (5.2%)	75 (4.8%)	54 (3.9%)	56 (3.9%)	46 (3.2%)
(c) 30% reimbursement	435 (25.1%)	470 (30.3%)	413 (29.5%)	427* (29.9%)	370 (25.4%)

@ The figures refer to the information as at May 31, 2019. Some applications for tuition fee reimbursement are being processed.

* The figures do not include two eligible learners who did not collect the

tuition fee reimbursement cheques by the specified date.

Note: The percentages in (a) to (c) may not add up to the percentages shown in the second row due to rounding.

(4) Learners attending eligible courses under the FAEAEC may apply for student loans under the Extended Non-Means-Tested Loan Scheme. The numbers of loan applicants in the 2014/15 to 2018/19 school years are tabulated below:

School year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19*
Number of loan applicants	1	1	0	2	0

* As at May 31, 2019.

(5)-(7) At present, the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod Limited, the Hong Kong College of Technology Group Limited and the Kwun Tong Lutheran Evening School are approved course providers participating in the FAEAEC for the provision of evening secondary courses in designated centres. The average annual tuition fees of the evening secondary courses offered by these providers in the 2018/19 school year are as follows:

Grade	Average annual tuition fee	Average additional cost for taking Applied Learning course (if applicable)
S1 to S3	\$10,950	N/A
S4	\$12,737	N/A
S5	\$12,737	\$10,877
S6	\$12,717	Such courses are not offered

In addition to the FAEAEC, to provide more support for learners taking evening secondary courses, the EDB has, since 2014/15 school year, earmarked an annual provision for approved course providers to provide support services to learners and teachers, such as conducting enriched learning activities, enhancing language training, providing Other Learning Experiences, student guidance and professional development and training of teachers. The amount of provision is calculated based on the number of learners. In the 2018/19 school year, the amount of funding for each learner was capped at \$1,000.

As learners attending evening secondary courses for adults are different from secondary students, it is difficult to make a comparison. Currently, there are different government financial assistance schemes for learners with different educational attainment/taking different courses. As pointed out in the first paragraph of the reply, the objective of the FAEAEC is to provide

an alternative form of financial assistance to assist adult learners in completing mainstream secondary school courses and help those learners with financial difficulties pursue their studies. We believe that needy learners are already provided with appropriate financial assistance through the FAEAEC and the support services funded by the EDB. The Bureau has no plan to offer free evening secondary education at the current stage.