

LCQ16: Results documents for Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination

Following is a question by the Hon Chu Kwok-keung and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (December 4):

Question:

It has been reported that some students were recently found to have allegedly submitted fake results documents for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) when applying for and during enrolment to a university in Macao. The relevant authorities in Macao have now stepped up verification for academic qualifications and examination results, while the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has also filed a police report on the incident. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of enquiries received by the HKEAA from institutions outside Hong Kong for establishing the authenticity of the HKDSE results in the past five years;

(2) of the number of cases involving suspected forgery of the HKDSE results documents uncovered by the HKEAA in the past five years;

(3) of the existing anti-forgery features in the HKDSE certification documents including result notice, statement of results and certification of results; whether the HKEAA has explored enhancements to anti-forgery measures for such documents; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether the Government will, by drawing reference from the practice of the Ministry of Education to establish the China Higher Education Student Information website, consider providing a unified platform that collates information on students' academic qualifications, student status and public examination files, and offers online verification services; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) is a widely recognised academic qualification in Hong Kong and abroad. It is also an important credential for further studies and employment of candidates. The Education Bureau (EDB) attaches great importance to the verification of the HKDSE results to maintain the confidence of people at home and abroad in the

HKDSE qualifications. Falsification or provision of fake academic qualifications is a serious offence. If any person attempts to use false documentation of results, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) will certainly refer the case to law enforcement agencies for follow-up action. The reply to the question raised by the Hon Chu Kwok-keung is set out below:

(1) and (2) In the past five years, the HKEAA has received one enquiry from a non-local tertiary institution about the authenticity of the HKDSE results held by its students. After verification, the HKEAA found that the HKDSE results of the students involved in this case were forged.

(3) Documents such as the HKDSE results notice, certificate, statement of results and certification of results issued by the HKEAA have multiple security features, including the use of watermarked fibre paper and microprinting technology for lettering. The HKEAA has also provided candidates, tertiary institutions and employers with result verification services (Note 1) to ensure that they can obtain or verify candidates' public examination results directly from official sources.

The HKEAA will annually review the various operational arrangements for the current HKDSE cohort for continuous improvements. It will also review and optimise the results verification services and security measures where necessary.

(4) It is understood that, as regards post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong, the Joint Universities Computer Centre, which is established by 19 post-secondary institutions and organisations (Note 2), has successfully developed and launched an inter-institutional academic certificate verification platform using blockchain technology. Post-secondary institutions and students may choose to use the platform at their own discretion. Participating institutions can digitalise and upload academic certificates of graduates to the platform, in order to allow students to share their credentials with relevant persons via the platform when seeking employment or further studies. The platform streamlines the verification of academic qualifications and helps combat forgery of credentials. As for the HKDSE, the HKEAA will closely monitor the situations and study the feasibility of developing an electronic results verification solution to enhance the efficiency of service. The EDB will closely monitor the application and development of the aforesaid qualification verification platforms and explore the feasibility of establishing a more comprehensive verification platform at a suitable juncture.

Notes:

1. The services include:

(a) HKDSE results extraction service: The HKEAA currently provides direct access to the results of the HKDSE for over 20 local and non-local universities, institutions and admission authorities, including the majority of the local tertiary institutions, Joint University Programmes Admissions System Office, the EDB, the respective joint admission offices of the Mainland and Taiwan, as well as a number of self-financing institutions in

Hong Kong. After obtaining the consent of the student applicants concerned, the institutions may obtain the HKDSE results of the student applicants concerned directly from the HKEAA on the release date of the HKDSE or on a specified date, and the whole process is conducted without the intervention of a third party, so as to ensure the authenticity of the information; and (b) Provision of Certification of Results: The HKEAA maintains records of candidates' results in public examinations since its establishment in 1977. Tertiary institutions or employers who need to check the public examination results of individual applicants may request the applicants to apply to the HKEAA for the issue of a "Certification of Results", which will be sent directly to the organisations specified by the applicants to certify the results of their public examinations.

2. Including the eight universities funded by the University Grants Committee; and the Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, Saint Francis University, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Vocational Training Council, Construction Industry Council, Hong Kong Chu Hai College, Tung Wah College, UOW College Hong Kong and University of Macau.