

LCQ19: VTC Earn and Learn Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Luk Chung-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (October 20):

Question:

Since the 2014-2015 academic year, the Government has implemented the Training and Support Scheme on a pilot basis through the Vocational Training Council (VTC) under the name of "VTC Earn and Learn Scheme" (the Scheme). Trainees receive apprenticeship training and may be disbursed a guaranteed level of salary and incentive allowance under the Scheme's "Earn and Learn" model. Upon completion of apprenticeship training, trainees may attain a range of Qualifications Framework-recognised qualifications. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the following figures in each of the past three academic years:
 - (i) the respective numbers of persons who were admitted to and completed the various programmes under the Scheme,
 - (ii) the number of trainees of the Scheme who were employed in the relevant industries upon completion of training,
 - (iii) the amount of funding granted to VTC by the Government for providing various programmes under the Scheme, and
 - (iv) the number of employers who participated in the Scheme, with a breakdown by industry; and
- (2) whether it has plans to expand the scope of the industries and programmes covered by the Scheme in the light of the trend of Hong Kong's economic development; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government has implemented the Pilot Training and Support Scheme (the Scheme) through the Vocational Training Council (VTC) since the 2014/15 academic year. Trainees of the Scheme will receive apprenticeship training under the "Earn and Learn" model alongside a guaranteed level of salary and incentive allowance, with a view to encouraging them to join the industries that require specialised skills and face labour shortage or ageing problems, in order to support the manpower needs of these industries. The Scheme has been regularised from the 2019/20 academic year, providing 1 200 training places each year. Since the launch of the Scheme, it has benefited more than 6 700 trainees.

Industries under the Scheme have to meet three criteria, including that the industries are facing labour shortage and/or ageing problems, and have difficulties in hiring and retaining young people; the relevant trades covered under the industries involve a high level of technology or

specialised contents; and the industries are committed to providing an allowance to trainees and to offering a certain salary level to trainees who have completed the apprenticeship training and are willing to join the relevant industries. At present, the Scheme covers a total of 12 industries with keen manpower demand, including electrical and mechanical engineering and construction, automobile and aviation.

Our reply to the questions raised by the Hon Luk Chung-hung is as follows:

(1) (i) and (ii) The numbers of student intakes and graduates of the programmes under the Scheme, and graduates who were employed in the relevant industries in the 2018/19 to 2020/21 academic years are set out at Annex 1.

(iii) The amounts of the Government's funding provided to the VTC for the Scheme in the 2018/19 to 2020/21 financial years are set out at Annex 2.

(iv) The numbers of employers who participated in the Scheme in the 2018/19 to 2020/21 academic years are set out at Annex 3.

(2) The VTC has all along been working closely with its 25 Training Boards and its industry partners to understand the development and manpower needs of various industries and review the industries covered by the Scheme in accordance with the above-mentioned criteria. Taking into account the actual situations of the industries, the VTC has expanded the Scheme to cover industries such as aviation, computer and electronic engineering, information technology, and arboriculture and horticulture, and launched the relevant programmes in the past three academic years. The VTC will continue to liaise closely with industry partners and keep abreast of the latest situation of various industries to continue its on-going review of the Scheme, and explore launching more suitable programmes, with a view to attracting and retaining talent for industries with keen manpower demand.