

## LCQ2: Vocational education

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (November 13):

Question:

It is learnt that the Government has allocated quite a lot of resources to promote the development of vocational education in recent years, including setting aside some \$680 million to support the Vocational Training Council's efforts in extending the Pilot Incentive Scheme to Employers (PISE) and the Pilot Subsidy Scheme for Students of Professional Part-time Programmes (Pilot Subsidy Scheme) for five years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of employers and trainees participating in the PISE and the number of trainees participating in the Pilot Subsidy Scheme in the 2023/24 academic year, as well as the amounts of subsidies involved, together with a breakdown by industry;
- (2) whether the PISE and the Pilot Subsidy Scheme will be regularised; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether the subsidy-to-tuition fee ratio of the Pilot Subsidy Scheme will be raised and, at the same time, whether the \$36,000 cap on tuition fee subsidy for the creative industries programmes and the health and life sciences programmes will be raised, so as to align with the \$45,000 cap on tuition fee subsidy for the construction and engineering programmes?

Reply:

President,

The Government is committed to promoting vocational and professional education and training (VPET), and, under the strategy of fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development, encourages the co-operation between industries and education and the collaboration between schools and businesses, with a view to providing diversified learning and career opportunities and nurturing more quality talent with applied skills. The Vocational Training Council (VTC) is the largest VPET provider in Hong Kong. The Financial Secretary announced in the 2024-25 Budget that the Government has set aside around \$680 million to support the VTC in strengthening its work on VPET, including extending the Pilot Incentive Scheme to Employers (PISE) and the Pilot Subsidy Scheme for Students of Professional Part-time Programmes (Pilot Subsidy Scheme) for five years, stepping up support for student-exchange activities, strengthening assistance to students with special educational needs, and encouraging employers to provide workplace learning opportunities.

The reply to the different parts of the question raised by the Hon Jimmy Ng is as follows:

(1) With the Government's support, the VTC has implemented the PISE under the Training and Support Scheme since the 2019/20 academic year (AY) to encourage employers to provide trainees with structured workplace learning and assessment, so that the content of training programmes could be more effectively adapted to enhance trainees' work performance. Employers participating in the PISE can receive a subsidy of up to \$36,000 (per trainee). In the 2023/24 AY, the numbers of participating employers and trainees under the PISE by industries are as follows:

Industry	Number of employers*	Number of trainees
Engineering & Technology	180	766
Transportation	20	90
Design, Jewellery and Creative Industry	4	4
Healthcare Services	11	16
Testing & Certification	5	9
Total	220	885

\* Due to the diverse nature of the businesses of some employers taking part in the scheme, the above-mentioned employers may engage trainees for different industries at the same time.

As of August 31, 2024, the subsidies involved in the PISE in the 2023/24 AY amounted to around \$21 million.

The Government has also implemented the Pilot Subsidy Scheme since the 2016/17 AY to provide tuition fee subsidies (60 per cent of the tuition fees) with a cap of \$45,000 per person for practitioners admitted to designated professional part-time programmes offered by the VTC related to the discipline of engineering. From the 2019/20 AY, the Pilot Subsidy Scheme has been expanded to cover VTC's programmes related to creative industries, with a subsidy cap of \$36,000 per person. The numbers of participants under the Pilot Subsidy Scheme in the 2023/24 AY by industries are as follows:

Industry	Number of practitioners
Engineering	2 007
Creative Industries	288
Total	2 295

As of October 31, 2024, the subsidies involved in the Pilot Subsidy

Scheme in the 2023/24 AY amounted to around \$15 million.

(2) and (3) As far as the Pilot Subsidy Scheme is concerned, the tuition fee subsidy levels for different designated courses are different, depending on the respective disciplines of the courses. The Financial Secretary announced in the 2024-25 Budget, the PISE and the Pilot Subsidy Scheme would be extended for five years. The Government will work closely with the VTC and review the effectiveness of the above two schemes, in order to consider their long-term operation and arrangements, including the tuition fee subsidy arrangements of the Pilot Subsidy Scheme.