

## LCQ20: Admission requirements for medical students

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hok-fung and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (June 28):

Question:

There are views pointing out that the Hippocratic Oath is the code of ethics observed by quite a number of medical students. However, incidents of strikes staged by Hong Kong healthcare practitioners took place during the riots in which political stances prevailed over professional conduct. Regarding the admission requirements for medical students, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the respective percentages of students admitted to the faculties of medicine of the two local universities through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) and non-JUPAS in the past three years and, among all the medical students admitted, of the number of students who sat for examinations of subjects similar to Liberal Studies or Citizenship and Social Development in public examinations (including those in Hong Kong and overseas);

(2) given that one of the objectives of the subject of Citizenship and Social Development is to cultivate among students a sense of national identity and the subject will become one of the compulsory subjects under the basic entrance requirements for JUPAS applications starting from the 2024/25 school year, whether it knows if the faculties of medicine of the two local universities have compiled statistics on whether students admitted through non-JUPAS have sat for examinations of subjects related to the development of a sense of national identity, and whether such courses will be included as a basic requirement for non-JUPAS applicants who are Hong Kong students enrolling for programmes in medicine; if they have not compiled the statistics and will not include such courses as a basic requirement for Hong Kong students enrolling for programmes in medicine, of the reasons for that; and

(3) as it is learnt that the universities in some countries require students to complete undergraduate degree programmes before they can enrol for programmes in medicine, whether it knows if the faculties of medicine of the two local universities will consider adopting such a requirement; if they will not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities are independent statutory bodies established pursuant to their respective ordinances and enjoy institutional autonomy in areas such as setting admission requirements. The admission standards of a number of programmes also benefit the requirements of a discipline to ensure that students on these programmes are equipped with the relevant background knowledge and abilities.

At present, local students sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) are mainly admitted to UGC-funded undergraduate programmes through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS); students with other qualifications (including international public examinations, sub-degrees and bachelor degrees) are required to submit their applications directly to individual UGC-funded universities (i.e. the non-JUPAS route). Each university formulates its own merit-based admission policy to assess applications from both JUPAS and non-JUPAS routes.

Our consolidated reply to the various parts of the questions is as follows:

(1) & (2) In the past three academic years (AY), the actual numbers and percentages of students admitted through JUPAS and non-JUPAS routes by the two UGC-funded universities offering medicine programmes at undergraduate level (i.e. the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and the University of Hong Kong (HKU)) are as follows:

University	AY	Actual intake (percentage)		
		JUPAS	Non-JUPAS	Total
CUHK	2020/21	183 (69%)	83 (31%)	266 (100%)
	2021/22	185 (67%)	90 (33%)	275 (100%)
	2022/23	198 (66%)	102 (34%)	300 (100%)
HKU	2020/21	148 (51%)	144 (49%)	292 (100%)
	2021/22	130 (47%)	147 (53%)	277 (100%)
	2022/23	121 (41%)	176 (59%)	297 (100%)

At present, Liberal Studies (LS) at senior secondary level is one of the core subjects in HKDSE. Starting from the 2021/22 school year, the Government is progressively introducing the subject of Citizenship and Social Development (CS) to replace LS at Secondary Four and maintains its requirement for compulsory public assessment. The first HKDSE for CS will be held in 2024. All local students enrolled in UGC-funded undergraduate programmes through JUPAS will be required to take either LS or CS and attain the required result to meet the general admission requirements. For non-JUPAS

students, the universities do not keep statistics on the number of students who have sat for public examinations in Hong Kong or overseas for subjects similar to LS or CS, or those related to national identity.

As mentioned above, universities enjoy institutional autonomy in areas such as setting admission requirements, etc., with the admission standards of a number of programmes befitting the requirements of a discipline. We have no plan to interfere with the universities' specific admission requirements for individual disciplines.

Nevertheless, universities have the responsibility to offer national education and national security education, and organise relevant activities for their enrolled students with a view to raising their awareness of national security, law-abidingness and national identity, and to nurture new generations with social responsibility, a sense of national identity, an affection for Hong Kong as well as international perspectives. In this regard, both CUHK and HKU have incorporated national education and national security education into the scope of learning of their students as a graduation requirement. This also applies to undergraduate students of the two medical schools.

(3) At present, the publicly-funded medicine programmes offered by CUHK and HKU are at undergraduate level with a normative study period of six AYs, which is longer than a typical four-year undergraduate programme and provides sufficient study time for students to acquire expert knowledge of the subject, receive clinical training and broaden their horizons. This arrangement has all along been effective in nurturing professionally competent medical practitioners in Hong Kong. Indeed, the positioning of medicine programmes as taught postgraduate programmes is mainly confined to North America; they remain predominantly as undergraduate programmes on the Mainland and in various other places around the world. The Government has no plan to change the relevant programme structure.