

LCQ22: Admission of local students holding overseas academic qualifications by universities funded by University Grants Committee

Following is a question by the Hon Ip Kin-yuen and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

The Joint University Programmes Admission System (JUPAS) is the main platform for students holding Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination results to apply for admission to undergraduate programmes funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC). Students holding other academic qualifications may only apply to individual UGC-funded universities (funded universities) directly for admission (non-JUPAS). However, some members of the public have relayed to me that the various funded universities have not made public details of the two methods of admitting students via the JUPAS and non-JUPAS routes (e.g. the ratios of places, the admission criteria), raising doubts as to whether funded universities treat those two types of students fairly in student admission. Regarding information on admission of local students holding overseas academic qualifications by funded universities, will the Government inform this Council if it knows:

(1) in respect of the publicly-funded first-year-first-degree programmes offered by each funded university in each of the past five academic years, (i) the total number of students and, among such students, (ii) the number of those admitted via the non-JUPAS route; among the students in (ii), the respective numbers and percentages of local students and non-local students (set out in a table); among those local students admitted via the non-JUPAS route, the respective numbers and percentages of those holding various types of overseas academic qualifications (e.g. International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level Programme), together with the respective names of the relevant academic qualifications (set out in a table);

(2) in respect of the 20 programmes with the largest numbers of local students admitted by each funded university via the non-JUPAS route in each of the past five academic years, the respective median and minimum academic qualifications of the local students who were admitted to each programme (set out in a table);

(3) the method currently adopted by various funded universities for ensuring that the admission thresholds for applicants holding different types of academic qualifications are consistent; and

(4) whether the local students admitted by funded universities via the non-JUPAS route will take up the places reserved for (i) international students or (ii) JUPAS students; whether UGC and funded universities have formulated guidelines to ensure fair treatment for students applying for admission via the JUPAS and non-JUPAS routes; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

The Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) is the main platform for students sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination to apply for admission to undergraduate programmes funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC). It aims at handling centrally applications for admission to university programmes by students holding specific public examination results (currently the HKDSE). For local students holding other academic qualifications, including sub-degree students of local post-secondary institutions and Hong Kong permanent residents who study in or outside Hong Kong and sit for international public examinations, they have to apply to individual UGC-funded universities direct for admission (commonly known as "non-JUPAS").

The UGC Notes on Procedures clearly state that UGC-funded universities enjoy autonomy in the development of curricula and academic standards, selection of staff and students, initiation and conduct of research, internal allocation of resources, etc., and they are accountable for their decisions in these matters. On the principles of fairness and merit-based selection, each university will work out its admission policy and criteria for different programmes to assess students' applications submitted through the JUPAS and non-JUPAS routes. All the universities shall endeavour to ensure that only the most deserving applicants are offered admission regardless of the types of academic qualifications they are holding. As a matter of fact, all candidates who are Hong Kong permanent residents deserve equal opportunities to be considered for admission to UGC-funded programmes on the basis of fair competition, irrespective of their admission routes and academic qualifications.

The Education Bureau's reply to the question raised by the Hon Ip is as follows:

(1) The total number of students, the number of local students admitted via the non-JUPAS route and the respective information of various types of non-local academic qualifications held by local students via the non-JUPAS route of each UGC-funded university in the past five academic years (i.e. 2013/14 to 2017/18 academic year) are set out at Annex 1.

(2) The respective median and minimum academic qualifications of the local students who were admitted via the non-JUPAS route to the 20 programmes with the largest numbers of local students of each UGC-funded university in the past five academic years (i.e. 2013/14 to 2017/18 academic year) are set out at Annex 2.

(3) and (4) Recognising institutional autonomy in student admission, neither the Government nor the UGC would require universities to specify a particular proportion of local students admitted through the JUPAS and non-JUPAS routes. Besides, in accordance with the prevailing policy, UGC-funded universities could only admit non-local students to UGC-funded programmes by way of over-enrolment, irrespective of the academic qualifications or results of any given examination used by non-local students for their applications. Such intake places should all be outside the UGC-funded places. In other words, the 15 000 UGC-funded first-year-first-degree intake places each year must be used for admitting local students including non-JUPAS local students. As such, non-JUPAS local students would not take up the places used for admission of non-local students, and vice versa.

According to UGC-funded universities, student admission is based on a rigorous and holistic assessment of applicants in a variety of aspects, including their academic qualifications and results, interview performance, personal attributes, non-academic achievements, interests and experiences, programme preferences. Hence, the applications via the JUPAS and non-JUPAS routes should not be simply compared by their academic results. All universities have accumulated a wealth of experience in assessing applicants with different academic qualifications and will continue to monitor the relative academic results and performance of students admitted with different academic qualifications to ensure that the admission thresholds are consistently applied to applicants holding different types of academic qualifications. The Bureau understands that universities do not apply any formula to convert and compare different academic and non-academic qualifications.