

# LCQ3: Post-secondary institutions

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Chow Man-kong and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 4):

Question:

Regarding post-secondary institutions, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the following information in respect of (a) 11 degree-awarding self-financing institutions (including institutions registered under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) and statutory institutions), (b) self-financing arms or community colleges under the eight universities funded by the University Grants Committee, and (c) post-secondary institutions registered under the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) or other relevant legislation, in each of the past three school years: (i) the number of teaching staff, (ii) the number of students enrolled in sub-degree/higher diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, (iii) the amount of grants that were matched with public funds, and (iv) the amount of funding awarded under the Competitive Research Funding Schemes for the Local Self-financing Degree Sector (set out in tables of the same format as the table below);

Type of post-secondary institutions:

Institution	Self-financing arm or community college (applicable to type (b) institutions)	School year	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)

(2) of the total up-to-date number of projects receiving funding under the Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education, and set out in a table the following information in respect of each approved project: (i) institution, (ii) the industry/sector involved in the project, (iii) project name, (iv) offering mode (i.e. full-time or part-time), (v) grants approved, (vi) cost savings and percentage, (vii) the key areas for which the grants are used and (viii) the number of students benefitted; if there were rejected project applications, of the percentage of rejected projects in each round of application and the specific reasons for that;

(3) as it is learnt that currently there is a cap on the number of non-local students that publicly-funded institutions and self-financing institutions may admit, of the specific details, legal basis and specific considerations of the relevant requirements; if the requirements for the two types of institutions are different, of the reasons for that; the specific details of the implementation of the relevant requirements by various post-secondary

institutions in each of the past three school years, and set out the number and percentage of non-local students by programme level;

(4) whether it will consider revoking or relaxing the cap on the number of non-local students (especially Mainland students) who may be admitted to self-financing programmes offered by publicly-funded institutions and self-financing institutions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether it will, in view of the strong demand for vocational education in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, consider revoking or relaxing the restrictions on the number of non-local students in self-financing programmes (especially sub-degree/higher diploma programmes related to vocational education and applied education) offered by self-financing institutions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

It has all along been the Government's policy to support the parallel development of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors. The self-financing sector helps diversify our higher education system and provides more education opportunities for our secondary school graduates. In pursuance of this policy, the Education Bureau (EDB) exercises oversight of the self-financing institutions focusing on ensuring their transparency of operation, quality assurance and good governance, while implementing a host of support measures to institutions as well as providing subsidies for students to promote a healthy and sustainable development of the self-financing sector.

In this connection, the EDB is proactively following up on the recommendations put forward by the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education in its review report submitted in December 2018. These recommendations include fostering the strategic co-ordination among institutions in respect of their positioning and programme offerings, and helping institutions identify and develop their distinct character and niche areas, with a view to promoting the healthy and sustainable development of the self-financing sector. The EDB has also repeatedly reminded institutions of the need to consolidate their programmes in terms of both quality and quantity in view of the student recruitment challenges facing them as a result of the decline in the number of secondary school graduates. The EDB will continue to maintain liaison with relevant institutions regarding their future development.

Our reply to the questions raised by Dr the Hon Chow Man-kong is as follows:

(1) The numbers of academic staff members of self-financing post-secondary institutions by institution from the 2019/20 to 2021/22 academic years (AYs) are at Annex 1.

The numbers of students enrolled in full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree (SD) and undergraduate (Ug) programmes by institution from the 2019/20 to 2021/22 AYs are at Annex 2.

The numbers of students enrolled in locally-accredited self-financing research postgraduate (RPg) and taught postgraduate (TPg) programmes by institution from the 2019/20 to 2021/22 AYs are at Annex 3.

The seventh round of the Matching Grant Scheme (MGS) was held from August 2017 to July 2019 for applications from qualified self-financing local degree-awarding institutions. The amounts of matching grants allocated to participating institutions by institution are at Annex 4. The eighth round of the MGS from July 2019 to March 2021 did not cover self-financing post-secondary institutions.

The Competitive Research Funding Schemes for the Local Self-financing Degree Sector was launched in 2013 to support the academic and research development of the local self-financing degree-awarding sector on a competitive basis through the funding of the Research Endowment Fund. The amounts of funding allocated to participating institutions under the Schemes by institution from 2019/20 to 2021/22 are at Annex 5.

(2) In the 2020/21 inaugural round of applications of the Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education (ESGS), 22 applications were received and six projects were approved with a total grant of about \$137 million. The approved projects cover a range of sectors, including allied health, financial, art and innovative technology, as well as maritime studies, which are conducive to catering for the keen manpower demand of the relevant industries. Details of the approved projects are at Annex 6.

The EDB is processing the applications received in the 2021/22 round of applications in accordance with the procedures, and will announce the application results in due course.

Under the ESGS, the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education (CSPE) will advise the Secretary for Education on the merits of the applications, having regard to the following:

- (a) whether a programme under application is able to nurture talent for a specific industry that has been identified with a strong human resources need/gap that has not been filled;
- (b) whether the programme under application is in line with the relevant institution's strategic positioning in the sector and its academic development plan; and
- (c) the programme design, costs, financial sustainability, student admission plan, and any other relevant factor.

The Secretary for Education will consider the recommendations of the CSPE and all relevant factors when making funding approval under the ESGS.

(3) to (5) Under the prevailing policy, the eight University Grants Committee

(UGC)-funded universities may admit non-local students to publicly-funded Ug programmes by way of over-enrollment. The total number of non-local students so admitted is subject to a quota of 20 per cent of the approved student number target for publicly-funded Ug places. Moreover, non-local students are required to pay tuition fees at a level which is sufficient to recover the costs for operating the relevant places. The same admission and tuition fee arrangements apply to publicly-funded SD and TPg programmes as well. In the 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 (provisional figures) AYs, the percentages of non-local students studying on publicly-funded programmes were 16.6 per cent, 16.9 per cent and 17.9 per cent of the approved student number targets for publicly-funded Ug places of that particular AY respectively, and the percentages for TPg programmes were 5.0 per cent, 4.6 per cent and 5.8 per cent respectively. There were no non-local students enrolled in publicly-funded SD programmes at the eight UGC-funded universities during the period. Statistics of non-local students studying on SD, Ug and TPg programmes at individual UGC-funded universities are set out at Annex 7. There is no quota restriction for the admission of non-local students to UGC-funded RPg programmes.

As regards self-financing post-secondary institutions, except students from the Mainland, Macao and Taiwan (MMT), there is no restriction on the admission of non-local students to full-time locally-accredited self-financing local SD, Ug, TPg, and RPg programmes. As for MMT students, currently, six local self-financing post-secondary institutions, namely, Chu Hai College of Higher Education, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Tung Wah College, and Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong under the Vocational Training Council, have been approved by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to admit Mainland students to their full-time locally-accredited self-financing local degree programmes. Under the mechanism agreed by the MoE, the number of MMT students enrolled in full-time locally-accredited self-financing local SD and Ug (including top-up degree) programmes by these six specified self-financing institutions in each AY should not exceed 10 per cent of the total student enrolment in such programmes in the preceding AY. There is no quota restriction for postgraduate programmes. As regards SD programmes, there is currently no restriction on specified self-financing institutions, namely, all self-financing institutions may admit non-local students to their full-time locally-accredited self-financing local SD programmes, but the above-mentioned 10 per cent quota is still applicable.

The numbers of MMT students of full-time locally-accredited self-financing local SD and Ug programmes of self-financing post-secondary institutions as well as the respective percentages of the total student enrolments in such programmes in the preceding AY, by institution and level of study, from the 2019/20 to 2021/22 AYs, are at Annex 8.

The prevailing Government policy aims to attract outstanding non-local students to study in Hong Kong, thereby further promoting the internationalisation of Hong Kong's higher education sector and reinforcing Hong Kong's status as a regional education hub. At the same time, we hope to

attract high-quality talents to work in Hong Kong to help relieve the current high demand for human resources. Maintaining an appropriate number for non-local students through the application of a quota can help strike a balance between achieving the policy objective of attracting outstanding talents to Hong Kong and maintaining the quality of teaching and learning as well as the supply and demand of the related ancillary facilities (e.g. classrooms, laboratories and hostel places). To achieve the above policy objective, the Government and UGC keep in view the relevant data from time to time and consider appropriate adjustments to the non-local student quota as necessary. We also maintain close communication with the MoE on matters relating to encouraging students from the Mainland to study in Hong Kong.