

LCQ5: Funding for bachelor's degree programmes in Chinese medicine

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Wing-kwong and a reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (November 29):

Question:

Regarding the funding of the University Grants Committee (UGC) for the full-time bachelor's degree programmes in Chinese medicine offered by the Hong Kong Baptist University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the numbers of UGC-funded first-year intake places for the aforesaid programmes in the 2019-2022 triennium and the 2022-2025 triennium, and the total amount of UGC recurrent grants allocated to the aforesaid three universities for such programmes since 2020, with a breakdown of the respective amounts of funding by portion of teaching ("T-portion"), research and professional activity;

(2) given that UGC, in allocating funding for the T-portion, groups the relative cost weightings into three price groups (i.e. Medicine and Dentistry, Engineering and Laboratory Based Studies, and Others) by broad academic programme category, and it is learnt that Chinese medicine does not fall under Medicine and Dentistry, or Studies Allied to Medicine and Health under Engineering and Laboratory Based Studies, whether the Government knows the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it knows if UGC will categorise Chinese medicine under Medicine and Dentistry or Studies Allied to Medicine and Health, so that bachelor's degree programmes in Chinese medicine can receive appropriate funding for the T-portion; if UGC will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government and the University Grants Committee (UGC) have been proactively nurturing talents for various sectors in Hong Kong and attach great importance to the manpower needs of Chinese Medicine. Under the existing mechanism, education and healthcare are specific manpower-planned disciplines, which now covers Chinese Medicine. The number of student places offered by the eight UGC-funded universities in the manpower-planned disciplines are determined by the Chief Executive-in-Council (CE-in-C) every triennium, taking into account the recommendations of relevant bureaux, and the universities will admit the specified number of students during the triennium. If there is an increase in the demand for specific manpower-

planned programmes, the relevant bureaux will seek additional resources within the Government in accordance with the established procedures, which will then be disbursed to the universities in the form of a block grant through the UGC. On the premise that the student number targets have been met, the universities may flexibly deploy their resources to meet the needs of different disciplines.

Since the questions raised by the Hon Chan Wing-kwong involve different bureaux/departments, having consulted the Health Bureau, our reply is as follows:

(1) During the planning exercise for the 2019-22 and 2022-25 triennia, the CE-in-C approved the provision of 79 and 70 first-year-first-degree (FYFD) intake places respectively for the Chinese Medicine programmes on the recommendation of the relevant bureau. The relevant programmes are offered by the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong. The numbers of FYFD intake places provided by the above universities in the 2019-22 triennium were 30, 25 and 24 respectively, while the numbers of FYFD places to be provided in the 2022-25 triennium are 30, 20 and 20 respectively. As aforementioned, recurrent grants are disbursed to the universities by the Government through the UGC in the form of a block grant. As such, we do not have the relevant figures on the portion of recurrent grants allocated to the Faculty of Chinese Medicine or School of Chinese Medicine within the universities.

(2) and (3) During the triennial planning exercise, the UGC assumes an advisory role in assessing the public funding requirements of the universities in accordance with the established formula. On such basis, the UGC recommends the amount of recurrent grants to be allocated to the universities within the triennium for the Government's consideration. Subject to the decision of the CE-in-C, the UGC Secretariat will disburse the funding in accordance with the Government's decision.

The methodology adopted by the UGC in determining the funding recommendations for the allocation of recurrent grants to the UGC-funded universities is made public in the Government's Legislative Council Brief on Recurrent Funding for the UGC-funded Universities for each triennium. Among others, the funding for the Teaching Portion is determined on the basis of student numbers, their study levels, i.e. sub-degree, undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate programmes, modes of study, i.e. part-time and full-time, and disciplines of study, etc. Some subjects are more expensive than the others because they require special equipment, laboratory, or more staff time, which will be reflected in the determination of the proposed allocation for each university. In accordance with the above principle, the UGC currently places 17 academic programme categories into three price groups, with Price Group A being Medicine and Dentistry with a relative cost weighting (RCW) of 3.6, Price Group B being Engineering and Laboratory-Based Studies, including Chinese Medicine programmes under Studies Allied to Medicine and Health disciplines, with a RCW of 1.4, and Price Group C being Others with a RCW of 1.0. For research postgraduate programmes, the RCW values are 1.8, 1.4 and 1.0 respectively. The UGC will continue to make

reference to different data, such as the average teaching expenditure per student, in reviewing and refining the mechanism from time to time.

I must stress that the funding allocated by the Government to the universities is in the form of block grants, and the underlying philosophy is that the universities have to assume the primary responsibility for optimising the use of limited public resources, and to properly manage and balance the allocation of resources among different disciplines on their own. The RCW adopted by the UGC is only one of the many basic parameters for devising funding recommendations. It is entirely different from the internal mechanisms of the universities for allocating resources to different disciplines; hence, the two should not be casually pegged. Under the principle of institutional autonomy, the Government and the UGC will not intervene in the internal resources allocation by the universities, and the universities have to be responsible for their own internal decisions. In fact, the number of student places for Chinese Medicine undergraduate programmes only accounts for 1 per cent to 3 per cent of the total number of student places allocated to the aforementioned three universities. With the Government's annual recurrent grants to the three universities amounting to more than \$10 billion in total, we believe that the universities have sufficient room for ensuring the proper allocation of resources.

The existing mechanism allows the universities to apply for extra-formulaic adjustments if there is a special need for additional resources for individual programmes which the universities have genuine difficulties in meeting such a need. In the past, there were cases where disciplines in Studies Allied to Medicine and Health being supported by the relevant bureaux in terms of policies and resources, and provided with extra-formulaic additional funding to subsidise the fees for Clinical Practice. Should there be any such requests on the special needs of resources relating to the Chinese Medicine programmes, the UGC Secretariat will refer them to the relevant bureau for consideration.

Thank you, President.

China Manned Space delegation shares experiences with secondary and primary students in dialogue sessions

The China Manned Space delegation this morning (November 29) attended dialogue sessions in groups with secondary and primary students organised by the Education Bureau at Pui Kiu Middle School, Ma Tau Chung Government Primary School (Hung Hom Bay), and Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated

School Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School respectively.

Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Ms Lu Xinning; the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin; and the Permanent Secretary for Education, Ms Michelle Li, also attended the events.

Addressing the session at Pui Kiu Middle School, Dr Choi expressed her warm welcome and respect to the delegation, and her gratitude to the Central People's Government for the arrangements. She said that the country's aerospace development is advancing rapidly, and it has made historic and exciting breakthroughs one after another in recent years. The country has now embarked on a moon landing mission of the manned lunar exploration programme, with the goal of landing Chinese on the moon for the first time by 2030 to carry out lunar scientific investigations and related technological experiments, and deepening humanity's understanding of the origin and evolution of the moon and the solar system. These would not only represent glorious achievements of Chinese people, but also provide significant contributions to the global development of aerospace technologies.

Speaking at the session at Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School, Ms Li said that the delegation's visit demonstrated the great importance and care that the country attaches to Hong Kong's young people. In recent years, the country's aerospace technologies have entered a fast lane of innovative development, making contributions to building a community with a shared future for mankind in space. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has also stepped up the promotion of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) education through the introduction of Science subject in primary schools enhanced with space science knowledge, dovetailing with the nation's strategy of "invigorating the country through science and education" to nurture innovation and technology talent. Ms Li also encouraged Hong Kong students to establish a foothold in Hong Kong, have the motherland at heart, set a global vision, gaze up at the sky and pursue their dreams bravely to contribute to the country, Hong Kong and human civilisation in the future.

During the events, members of the delegation interacted with more than 550 students from 20 primary schools and more than 690 students from 21 secondary schools respectively. They talked about the national developments and achievements in aerospace technologies as well as their lives and valuable experiences in space.

Students proactively raised questions, covering subjects such as the outlook of future space exploration, the possibility for humans to live in space and the application and development of artificial intelligence in the area of aerospace. The delegation members answered them all in detail.

LCQ14: Youth development work

Following is a question by Reverend Canon the Hon Peter Douglas Koon and a written reply by the Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, in the Legislative Council today (November 29):

Question:

The Government promulgated the Youth Development Blueprint in December last year, outlining the overall vision and guiding principles for its long-term youth development work in future, while putting forward more than 160 specific actions and measures conducive to youth development at the initial stage. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Government will launch a one-stop information mobile app for youth to disseminate diversified information on various youth development programmes, whether such an app will be equipped with a function for users to provide feedback, so as to enable the Government to receive the views of young people more effectively, instead of simply disseminating information unilaterally; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as the Government will re-launch the Starter Homes for Hong Kong Residents projects in the Land Sale Programme in the current financial year, whether it will set aside quotas for the youths in such projects to implement a tailor-made scheme for young people; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) given that the Government established the District Youth Community Building Committee and the District Youth Development and Civic Education Committee in 18 districts in April this year, whether it will, by drawing reference from the eligibility criteria for members of the District Services and Community Care Teams, require members of such committees to sign a declaration in relation to national security and to be persons having no criminal convictions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) given the designation of the Deputy Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs (Youth Affairs) of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau as the Commissioner for Youth (the Commissioner) to co-ordinate youth development work in various areas within the Government, whether the Government has assessed if the substantive rank of the Commissioner (i.e. Deputy Secretary) will render it difficult for him to co-ordinate various policy bureaux and rationalise the relevant work; how the Commissioner ensures that various policy bureaux are able to take forward the initiatives in relation to youth affairs effectively so that the relevant indicators will be met?

Reply:

President,

The Government all along attaches great importance to youth development.

The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) released the Youth Development Blueprint (the Blueprint) late last year to outline the overall vision and guiding principles for the Government's long-term youth development work in future, with a vision to nurture a new generation of young people with an affection for our country and Hong Kong, and equipped with global perspective and positive thinking. The Blueprint put forward more than 160 measures, including some which assist young people in overcoming hurdles in education, employment, entrepreneurship and home ownership, providing all-round support for youth development.

In consultation with the Housing Bureau, the consolidated reply to the question raised by Reverend Canon the Hon Peter Douglas Koon is as follows:

(1) The HYAB plans to launch a youth-oriented mobile application (the App) in the first quarter of 2024. It will disseminate the latest information on youth development and a wide range of activities, so that young people can explore different areas and development opportunities based on their individual needs and interests. In designing the App, the HYAB collected opinions from more than 1 300 young people via survey and focus groups to better understand their expectations and suggestions on the App. We plan to incorporate a feedback function in the App so that we can keep tabs on contents that are more popular among young users. After the launch of the App, we will closely monitor its implementation and user feedback, and review and optimise its functions and contents continuously. We will launch updated versions and new features as and when appropriate to ensure that the App can cater for the needs of young people.

(2) Starter Homes for Hong Kong Residents (SH) projects could help address the home ownership aspirations of those who are not eligible for purchasing Home Ownership Scheme flats and yet cannot afford private housing. The Government is committed to developing SH projects with a view to enriching the housing ladder, and ensuring that the various housing rungs can meet the needs of different home purchasers. Apart from the first two SH projects of the Urban Renewal Authority (i.e. eResidence Towers 1 and 2, as well as eResidence Towers 3) launched for sale which provide a total of 753 SH units, the Government is taking forward four other SH projects, which will provide over 5 800 SH units.

The majority of the past applicants and purchasers for SH were young people aged 40 or below, illustrating that SH projects can help the youth realise their home ownership aspirations. Since SH units, being subsidised housing, are precious resources of the community, the allocation of such units has to balance the needs of different stakeholders. The Government thus does not have any plan at this stage to set aside special quotas for the youth under SH projects.

(3) The Chief Executive announced in his 2022 Policy Address the launch of the Youth Participation Initiative. One of the initiatives is for the Home Affairs Department (HAD) to open up certain seats of the District Youth Community Building Committee and the District Youth Development and Civic Education Committee (the Committees) set up in 18 districts for young people to nominate themselves as members. Each of the Committees consists of 20 to

30 members, one-third of whom are self-nominated youth members.

The HAD invited self-nominations to the Committees in January 2023 and attracted close to 1 100 applications. Assessment Panels were set up by all District Offices to recruit young people on merit basis, who have a strong commitment to serve the community, a good understanding of district and youth affairs, as well as good analytical and communication skills. About 330 young people in total have joined the Committees, which aim to provide forums for members to offer their views on district affairs such as district works projects, youth development and civic education. There is no requirement for members to sign any declaration, and the origin or background of the young people is not a factor for consideration in the recruitment process.

(4) Youth development work involves a wide range of issues and stakeholders which straddles various policy areas. One of the guiding principles set out in the Blueprint is to enhance central governance and co-ordination, with a view to facilitating cross-bureau and cross-sector collaboration (including the Government, business sector, academia and the community), as well as engaging and driving various sectors to participate in youth work. The Commissioner for Youth, a dedicated position with specific responsibilities, is an important component in the governance structure for the Government's youth work. It serves to strengthen internal co-ordination for youth development work within the Government and liaise with various sectors of the community to enhance their communication and collaboration with the Government. Besides, the Youth Development Commission, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, plays an effective and high-level leadership role in monitoring and assessing the implementation progress of the Blueprint, and in steering various bureaux to take forward youth work in an effective manner.

[LCQ20: Hospital accreditation programmes](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hok-fung and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (November 29):

Question:

The 2023 Policy Address has mentioned that the Hospital Authority (HA) will resume the "hospital accreditation programme" (accreditation programme) to ensure its management and services attaining international standards, and support the Shenzhen Hospital Accreditation Research Centre (the Research Centre) to set up an office in Hong Kong with a view to contributing to the internationalisation of the national hospital accreditation standards. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the HA suspended the accreditation programme which had been implemented for nearly 10 years in 2017, whether it knows HA's reasons for resuming the programme;

(2) whether it knows the details of the accreditation programmes (including pilot programmes) in which public and private hospitals are participating currently and participated in the past (including the names of the organisers and the countries to which they belong, and the number of accreditation programmes participating and participated), as well as the merits and demerits of the various programmes concerned;

(3) whether it has assessed if resuming the accreditation programme will increase the amount of paperwork for healthcare personnel; if it will, whether the Government has corresponding plans to ensure that the quality of healthcare services will not be affected, such as having the senior management of hospitals lead the work of issuing relevant documents;

(4) whether it knows the respective numbers of local healthcare personnel who are qualified for (i) becoming the surveyors of the relevant accreditation programmes and (ii) participating in the assessment of overseas hospital accreditation; of the future plans to train more such surveyors; and

(5) as it is learnt that the Research Centre, which the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital took the lead in setting up, has formulated a set of International Hospital Quality Accreditation Standards (2021 Version) which have integrated the international accreditation standards and the accreditation standards of national "Grade 3A" hospitals, and has obtained relevant international accreditation, in addition to such work, how the Government will contribute to the internationalisation of the national hospital accreditation standards in the future, and of Hong Kong's role and positioning in the relevant work?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health, the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hok-fung is as follows:

(1) and (2) With the advancement in medical technology and the increased healthcare needs brought about by demographic changes, hospital services have become increasingly complex. A sound risk and quality management system can provide an important basis on which the quality of healthcare services is raised. Hospital accreditation is a widely adopted tool in many parts of the world. Through the assistance of external and independent professional hospital accreditation organisations, various aspects of the performance of hospitals are assessed in an objective manner to determine if such performance is up to the expected standards, with a view to enhancing the quality of healthcare institutions and safeguarding patient safety. It also allows for an objective and systematic assessment for the risks and inadequacies in the management, facilities, operations and other areas of

hospitals so as to continuously improve service quality.

The HA commenced collaboration with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards, an international accreditation organisation, in 2009 to implement the Hospital Accreditation Programme. As of 2017, a total of 20 hospitals under the HA had been awarded accreditation status. During the process of obtaining accreditation, based on self-evaluations and recommendations of independent surveyors, each hospital made continuous quality improvement in various areas and services, such as refinement of the management and performance review system, the standardisation of services and workflows, and reduction of duplicative work.

The HA has been continuously exploring improvement and optimisation of the accreditation model having regard to the situation and characteristics of public hospitals, and commenced a review of the Hospital Accreditation Programme in 2017. The review concluded that the marginal benefits of continuing the programme in the same manner had gradually diminished and was not cost-effective overall. As a result, the HA officially ended its collaboration programme with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards in 2019.

Subsequently, the HA has been monitoring the situation and endeavouring to identify an accreditation system that is more suitable for adoption in the local public healthcare system and meets international standards and requirements, with a view to continuously improving the quality of hospital services.

In December 2020, the Shenzhen Hospital Accreditation Research Center (Research Center) was established under the direction of the Shenzhen Municipal Health Commission. Based on the International Society for Quality in Health Care's standard-setting principles, and with incorporation of features from the national "Tier III Class A" hospital accreditation standards (such as multi-dimensional accreditation, quality assessment with healthcare indicators, case tracking, and system tracking), the Research Center has developed the China's International Hospital Accreditation Standards (2021 Version). These standards integrate both international and national standards and have successfully obtained accreditation from the International Society for Quality in Health Care.

In line with the policy regarding hospital accreditation in the Chief Executive's Policy Addresses of 2022 and 2023, the HA will resume the Hospital Accreditation Programme by adopting the China's International Hospital Accreditation Standards (2021 Version) at Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital and Prince of Wales Hospital in 2023-24, with a view to ensuring that the management and service levels as well as the healthcare quality of hospitals are on par with international standards, enhancing the uniformity of hospital accreditation standards as well as the quality and safety of healthcare in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), and aligning with the national healthcare system.

In the private hospital sector, the Government implemented the Pilot Scheme on Hospital Accreditation (Pilot Scheme) in May 2009. At that time,

three private hospitals participated in the Pilot Scheme and obtained accreditation from the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards in 2010 and 2011 respectively. As of October 2023, a total of 11 private hospitals have been awarded accreditation status, of which nine have been accredited by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards and two have been accredited by the Joint Commission International. Both of these accreditation organisations are recognised by the International Society for Quality in Health Care. Meanwhile, some private hospitals have expressed their intention to adopt the China's International Hospital Accreditation Standards (2021 Version) in initiating their hospital accreditation work.

(3) and (4) At present, the HA has set up a working group to guide public hospitals in the implementation of the Hospital Accreditation Programme based on the China's International Hospital Accreditation Standards (2021 Version). Drawing on the experience gained from the implementation of the accreditation programme in the past, the HA will ensure that healthcare staff are adequately supported in carrying out accreditation-related work. The HA will carefully plan the implementation timetable of the Hospital Accreditation Programme having regard to the readiness of hospitals, taking into full account the workload of frontline staff and giving priority to clinical work, so as to commencing the programme at a steady pace. With the objective of significantly reducing the administrative workload of frontline staff while achieving continuous improvement in the quality of hospital services and patient safety, the HA will carry out the Hospital Accreditation Programme with the following key directions:

1. focus on continuous improvement – not performance assessment;
2. eliminate duplication of work processes – integration into routine work; and
3. strengthen central co-ordination – allocating resources for improvement.

To ensure the smooth implementation of the Hospital Accreditation Programme, healthcare staff from both the public and private healthcare institutions in Hong Kong have actively participated in the surveyor training organised by the Research Center. Training of the first batch of surveyors was held in January 2023 with the participation of 14 surveyors from Hong Kong, including eight HA staff. Training of the second batch of surveyors was held in July 2023. Among the seven surveyors and 18 observers from Hong Kong, three surveyors and 10 observers were HA staff. Surveyor training is the foundation for the commencement of the Hospital Accreditation Programme, and the HA will continue to encourage healthcare staff to actively participate in future surveyor training to be held by the Research Center.

(5) Hong Kong's healthcare system is world-renowned, with experience in international hospital accreditation, and the development of healthcare policies and industry standards is aligned with international practices. The adoption and implementation of the China's International Hospital Accreditation Standards (2021 Version) and the resumption of the Hospital Accreditation Programme by the HA will not only ensure that the management and service standards as well as healthcare quality of hospitals are on par with international standard, but also complement the integration within the GBA and promote uniformity of the healthcare services in the GBA, as well as

align with the national healthcare system. Relevant work will also enable the international community to have a better understanding of these hospital accreditation standards, thereby contributing to the internationalisation of the national hospital accreditation standards.

FEHD orders restaurant in Tai Po to suspend business for 21 days

â€‹The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene has ordered a restaurant in Tai Po to suspend business for 21 days, as the operator repeatedly breached the Food Business Regulation (FBR) by extending the business area illegally.

The restaurant, located at Shop 35 and 36 on the ground floor of Tai Wo Centre, 15 Tai Po Tai Wo Road, was ordered to suspend business from today (November 29) to December 19.

"Four convictions for the above-mentioned breach were recorded against the restaurant this April and August, with a total fine of \$13,000 levied by the court. Sixty demerit points were also registered against the licensee under the department's demerit points system, resulting in a seven-day and a 14-day business suspensions to be executed consecutively," a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said.

The spokesman reminded the licensees of food premises to comply with the FBR and other relevant regulations, or their licences could be suspended or cancelled.

Licensed food premises are required to exhibit a sign, at a conspicuous place near the main entrance, indicating that the premises have been licensed. A list of licensed food premises is available on the FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/index.html).