

UGC releases University Accountability Agreements

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The University Grants Committee (UGC) today (June 27) released the University Accountability Agreements (UAAs) for the 2019-22 triennium signed with the UGC-funded universities. The agreements were signed by the Chairman of the UGC, Mr Carlson Tong; the Secretary-General of the UGC, Professor James Tang; and the Council Chairmen and Heads of the UGC-funded universities.

Mr Tong said, "Our universities play a critical role in the development of our society and the UGC has therefore always attached great importance to their robust governance. I am very pleased with the signing of the first UAA, which illustrates the concerted efforts of both the UGC and the UGC-funded universities to enhance accountability and transparency of the universities in their performance in the education of our youths and their drive to continuous improvement."

Pursuant to a key recommendation of the "Governance in UGC-funded Higher Education Institutions in Hong Kong" report (the Governance Report), the UAA was established after many rounds of consultations with universities over a three-year period since 2016. In addition to setting out the duties and responsibilities associated with public funding, the individual UAA contains performance indicators which include both sector-wide performance measures and institution-specific key performance indicators. They cover five key domains: (1) quality of the student experience of teaching and learning; (2) quality of research performance and of the research postgraduate experience; (3) knowledge transfer and wider engagement; (4) enhanced internationalisation; and (5) financial health and institutional sustainability. The performance indicators provide a useful tool for the UGC to assess the performance of universities against their individual goals under the principle of institutional autonomy.

Mr Tong stressed that the UGC-funded sector enjoys an excellent international reputation. Effective governance and public accountability of institutional activities would further assure public confidence and help ensure the sustainability of the UGC-funded sector.

Mr Tong added, "I would like to thank the universities, their councils and their management teams for their earnest support and valuable input to the UGC in establishing the UAA. The process of arriving at the agreed UAA was made much easier as a result of the ongoing and constructive dialogue between the universities and the UGC. I believe we have together made an important step in ensuring the continued success of our sector, which in turn contributes to the sustainable development of Hong Kong. Last but not the least, I would like to express my gratitude to Sir Howard Newby, author of

the Governance Report, who also led the Task Force on Implementation of the Governance Report Recommendations in producing the UAA."

The UAA forms an integral part of the 2019-22 triennium funding planning process and the UGC will closely engage with the universities to reflect on the implementation of the UAA in light of future development and operational experience. As an enhanced governance framework, the UAA will be refined based on experience gained over time.

The individual UAAs have been uploaded to the website of the UGC (www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/activity/university_acc_agree.html).