

University Grants Committee welcomes new initiative on higher education announced in “The Chief Executive’s 2019 Policy Address”

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

The Chairman of the University Grants Committee (UGC), Mr Carlson Tong, welcomed the new initiative, announced in "The Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address" today (October 16), of providing fellowships on a pilot basis for five cohorts to meritorious local students to pursue designated taught postgraduate programmes of priority areas conducive to the development of Hong Kong offered by the eight UGC-funded universities.

The UGC-funded universities have all along attached great importance to cultivating talent to meet the strategic needs of Hong Kong. The UGC believes that cutting-edge cross-disciplinary training at postgraduate level is a suitable channel to speedily strengthen the talent pool for Hong Kong's strategic development in priority areas, including: STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics); promoting good health; developing a sustainable environment; enhancing Hong Kong's strategic position as a regional and international business centre; advancing emerging research; and promoting the creative, cultural and heritage sectors.

Subject to funding approval by the Legislative Council, the Scheme will be open to students who pursue designated taught postgraduate programmes, subject to a cap of \$120,000 per fellowship, to subsidise their tuition fees. The Scheme will provide a maximum of 500 fellowships for the first cohort of students (admitted in the 2020/21 academic year) and 1 000 thereafter. Details will be announced in due course.

Mr Tong said, "I believe the Scheme will incentivise more meritorious local students to pursue further studies in the priority areas of Hong Kong and encourage the universities to establish more innovative and multi-disciplinary programmes that are beneficial to society. I truly appreciate the Government's continued support for the higher education sector in recent years, including the \$20 billion injection into the Research Endowment Fund that has been provided to further the research excellence of Hong Kong. The UGC will continue to work closely with the Government, the universities and other stakeholders in taking forward all these initiatives."