

University Grants Committee welcomes “The Chief Executive’s 2023 Policy Address”

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

The Chairman of the University Grants Committee (UGC), Mr Tim Lui, welcomed the Chief Executive's proposal of developing Hong Kong into an international post-secondary education hub in "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address", and said that the UGC would work closely with the eight UGC-funded universities to take forward various relevant measures.

Mr Lui said, "Thanks to the significant investment in higher education by the Government over the years, there are currently five universities in Hong Kong within the world's top 100. We therefore possess ample advantages of developing into an international post-secondary education hub. The various initiatives proposed in the Policy Address can further attract more talent from all over the world to come to Hong Kong, and provide our local students with more learning opportunities to broaden their perspectives, thereby bringing Hong Kong's higher education to new heights."

According to the relaxation measures announced in the Policy Address, the enrolment ceiling of non-local students of taught programmes (i.e. undergraduate degree, sub-degree and taught postgraduate degree programmes) of UGC-funded universities will be doubled from currently a level equivalent to 20 per cent of local student places to 40 per cent starting from the 2024/25 academic year. Universities may progressively admit more non-local students having regard to their own conditions. It should be noted that all non-local students of UGC-funded taught programmes do not receive public funding, and that the number of such non-local students is accounted for separately from local student places so as to ensure that study opportunities for local students will not be affected.

The UGC also welcomed the 50 per cent increase in the quota of the Belt and Road Scholarship as well as other related initiatives by the Government. The UGC will further support universities' participation in more publicity and recruitment activities at different places to proactively promote the unique advantages of Hong Kong's higher education to the world. This will attract more outstanding students of different origins and cultural backgrounds to study in Hong Kong, and further enhance the quality, capacity and vibrancy of Hong Kong's higher education sector.

In addition, the UGC launched the Funding Scheme for Mainland and Global Engagement and Student Learning Experience last year for UGC-funded universities to support more students to participate in exchange activities outside Hong Kong, with emphasis on the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to encourage students to set their sights on opportunities on the

Mainland as well as to promote multicultural interactions on campus. From the 2023/24 academic year, the UGC will inject an additional funding of \$100 million into the Funding Scheme to benefit more students who were unable to leave Hong Kong for exchange activities in the past few years due to the pandemic.

Further to last year's decision to gradually increase the number of publicly funded research postgraduate student places from 5 595 to 7 200 in each academic year, the Policy Address proposes to gradually increase the quota of the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme to 400. The UGC believed that such move would attract more talent to study and conduct research in Hong Kong, thereby boosting Hong Kong's research capability and achievements.

"The various initiatives for building an international post-secondary education hub and developing the 'Northern Metropolis University Town' in the Northern Metropolis as announced in the Policy Address will inject unprecedented impetus for growth into Hong Kong's higher education sector. The UGC will work together with our funded universities to seize the immense opportunities ahead, and contribute proactively towards realising the splendid vision of developing Hong Kong into an international post-secondary education hub," Mr Lui added.