

Education

In an increasingly competitive and connected world, education is of vital importance. Reflecting that, total government expenditure on education has increased from \$53.8 billion in 2007-08 to \$89.8 billion in 2017-18 estimates, or 18.2 per cent of total government spending.

The Secretary for Education, who heads the Education Bureau, formulates, develops and reviews educational policies, secures funds from the government budget, and oversees the implementation of educational programmes with the support of the Permanent Secretary for Education.

The total government expenditure on education in the 2017-18 estimates is \$89.8 billion, making up 18.2 per cent of total government expenditure. Of this, \$80.9 billion is recurrent expenditure on education, comprising 21.7 per cent of total recurrent government expenditure.

The Education Commission advises the Secretary for Education on overall educational objectives and policies and the priorities in implementing its recommendations, coordinates the work of major education-related advisory bodies, oversees the operation of the Quality Education Fund, and submits its reports and recommendations to the Secretary for Education.

The commission comprises a chairman, a vice-chairman who is the Permanent Secretary for Education, eight ex-officio members and a number of non-official members. The eight ex-officio members are the chairpersons of the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education, the Curriculum Development Council, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Council, the Quality Education Fund Steering Committee, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, the University Grants Committee (UGC) and the Vocational Training Council (VTC). The non-official members come from both education and non-education fields.

The UGC is a non-statutory body appointed by the Chief Executive. It offers impartial and expert advice to the government on the funding and development of higher education, and provides assurance to the government and the community on the standards and cost-effectiveness of the operations of the eight publicly funded universities, known as UGC-funded universities.

Under the UGC's aegis are the Research Grants Council, which advises on the research needs of the academic sector and the distribution of research funding, and the Quality Assurance Council, which helps assure the quality of all programmes of the UGC-funded universities.

UGC members are appointed by the Chief Executive in their personal capacity and all are prominent in their fields. They comprise accomplished academics and higher education administrators from outside Hong Kong, and eminent community leaders and academics of high standing locally. The UGC Secretariat, a government department, provides administrative support.

Education in Hong Kong

The government provides 12 years' free primary and secondary education to all children through public-sector schools, which form the majority in the school system. These consist of government schools operated directly by the government and aided schools that are generally run by religious or charitable organisations, fully subvented by the government and managed by their own incorporated management committees or school management committees. To meet the different needs of students, there are other types of schools, namely Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools, which can charge school fees, receive government subvention based on enrolment and enjoy greater flexibility, and self-financed private schools.

Hong Kong's 53 international schools, including 15 operated by the English Schools Foundation, provide about 43,600 places as at September, catering mainly to the demand of non-local families living in Hong Kong for work and investment. Generally operated on a self-financing basis, these schools offer different non-local curricula, including those of the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and the United States, as well as the International Baccalaureate programme.

Both publicly funded and self-financing post-secondary programmes are available at sub-degree, undergraduate and higher levels. The publicly funded programmes are provided by the eight UGC-funded universities, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and the VTC. Diverse self-financing post-secondary programmes are available at post-secondary institutions with a choice of study pathways and multiple entry and exit points.

Kindergarten Education

Kindergarten education is not compulsory and all kindergartens are privately run. In the 2017-18 school year, the government started implementing a new kindergarten education policy to give eligible local non-profit-making kindergartens a direct subsidy which is, in principle, sufficient for the provision of quality half-day service for all eligible children aged between three and six. The policy objectives are to provide quality and highly affordable kindergarten education, and to enhance students' access to different services that suit their needs. In tandem, the quality of kindergarten education is enhanced, including by raising the requirement of teacher-pupil ratio from 1:15 to 1:11, revising the curriculum guide, promoting teachers' professional development, strengthening support to students with diverse needs, enhancing the quality assurance framework and promoting parent education. Out of about 1,030

kindergartens in 2017-18, about 770 were non-profit-making local kindergartens eligible to join the new kindergarten education scheme and 748 have joined.

Primary Education

Public-sector primary schools offer six years' free education. A child starts primary education at about age six. In September, 293,457 children were enrolled in 454 public-sector primary schools, comprising 34 government schools and 420 aided schools. In addition, 21 DSS primary schools offered 16,173 places and 62 private primary schools offered 38,334 places.

Admissions to Primary 1 in public-sector schools are administered through the centralised Primary One Admission System, divided into two stages: Discretionary Places Admission and Central Allocation. Each school will first earmark about half of its Primary 1 places as discretionary places, and parents may apply to only one government or aided school within or outside the school catchment area, or 'school net', where they live. The remaining 50 per cent of Primary 1 places are for central allocation. Of these, 10 per cent are meant for parents to make up to three Unrestricted School Choices from any school net for their child, while 90 per cent are for parents to make Restricted School Choices in their school net in order of preference.

Secondary Education

Public-sector secondary schools also provide six years' free education. In September, 261,242 students were enrolled in 392 public-sector secondary schools, comprising 359 aided schools, 31 government schools and two caput schools that are subsidised mainly according to the number of students admitted. There were also 61 DSS secondary schools offering 55,950 places and 20 private secondary schools offering 8,189 places.

All students undergo three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary education leading to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE).

Subsidised Secondary 1 places are allocated through the Secondary School Places Allocation System, divided into two stages: Discretionary Places and Central Allocation. Schools participating in the system reserve not more than 30 per cent of their Secondary 1 places as discretionary places and parents may apply for their child direct to not more than two participating schools in any districts. The schools' remaining places, after deducting discretionary and repeater places, are used for central allocation, of which 10 per cent are meant for parents to make not more than three Unrestricted School Choices from any school net, while 90 per cent are for parents to make a maximum of 30 Restricted School Choices from the school net to which their child belongs.

Students completing junior secondary education normally remain in the same school for their senior secondary education or attend full-time, fully subvented vocational training courses run by the VTC.

Senior Secondary Curriculum

The senior secondary curriculum is flexible, coherent and diversified. It aims to cater for students' varied interests, needs, aptitudes and abilities. Students take four core subjects and

acquire Other Learning Experiences. They can also choose two or three elective subjects from 20 senior secondary subjects, a range of Applied Learning (ApL) courses and six Other Languages.

ApL courses are introduced at Secondary 5 and 6. They place equal emphasis on practice and theory linked to broad professional and vocational fields. In the 2017-19 cohort, 35 ApL courses are offered under six areas of studies: Creative Studies; Media and Communication; Business, Management and Law; Services; Applied Science; and Engineering and Production.

On completion of their study at Secondary 6, students take the HKDSE Examination. This certification receives extensive recognition in international benchmarking studies such as the National Recognition Information Centre report and the Tariff System of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service in the UK. The Australian government recognises the HKDSE as comparable to the Australian Senior Secondary School Certificate. Over 270 tertiary institutions worldwide, including Oxford and Yale universities, recognise the qualification for admission purposes, and more are being added.

In 2016, about 89 per cent of Secondary 6 graduates pursued further full-time studies, among whom about 10 per cent studied outside Hong Kong.

Under the state Ministry of Education's Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions, some Mainland higher education institutions admit Hong Kong students on the basis of their HKDSE Examination results and exempt them from taking the Joint Entrance Examination for Universities on the Mainland. In the 2017-18 academic year, over 2,500 Hong Kong students applied under the scheme and about 1,300 were admitted. In 2018-19, the number of participating institutions will increase from 90 to 102, located in 18 Mainland provinces and municipalities and one autonomous region.

Chinese History Education

Chinese history is an integral part of the curriculum for all primary and secondary schools. Learning content on the Chinese nation, Chinese history and Chinese culture is included in the General Studies subject at primary level. At junior secondary level, all schools should offer Chinese History as an independent compulsory subject from 2018-19, according to the October 2017 Policy Address, and devote about two periods per week to Chinese History. At senior secondary level, Chinese History is an elective subject. To enhance students' interest in learning the subject, the Ad Hoc Committee under the Curriculum Development Council is reviewing and revising the Junior Secondary Chinese History subject curriculum. The second stage of consultation started on 30 October 2017. It is expected that the review and revision work will be completed by 2018.

Basic Law Education

The Basic Law is a constitutional document for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). It enshrines within a legal document the important concepts of 'one country, two systems', 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy. It also prescribes the various systems to be practised in the HKSAR. The Basic Law is related closely to our daily lives.

To support Basic Law education, the government provides a range of support measures for schools, including learning and teaching resources, professional development programmes for principals and teachers, Mainland exchange programmes and a territory-wide inter-school Basic Law competition.

Elements of Basic Law education have long been incorporated into the curricula and learning activities of primary and secondary schools. The subjects involved include General Studies at primary level, Life and Society and Geography at junior secondary level, Liberal Studies at senior secondary level, and Chinese History and History at both junior and senior secondary levels.

Language Education

The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research advises the government on language education issues and on the use of the Language Fund as well as the policy and procedures governing its operation. The fund supports initiatives to improve proficiency in Chinese and English, including Putonghua.

The government's language education policy is to train the younger generation to become biliterate in written Chinese and English and trilingual in Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English.

At the same time, the government believes students should undertake their general education in a language that is not itself a barrier to learning. The policy on medium of instruction is therefore to uphold mother-tongue teaching while enhancing students' proficiency in both Chinese and English. Public-sector primary schools generally teach in Chinese. Public-sector secondary schools can increase junior secondary students' opportunities for exposure to, and use of, English, taking into account their ability and desire to learn in English, teachers' capability and readiness to teach in English, and support measures to facilitate learning in English under fine-tuned medium of instruction arrangements that start at Secondary 1 and progress to a higher form at junior secondary level. At senior secondary level, schools can select either Chinese or English as the medium of instruction on a subject basis, depending on the school context and the readiness and capabilities of both teachers and students.

Schools are encouraged to devise a whole-school language policy in line with the policy goal on medium of instruction, sustain their good practices in promoting language learning and deepen the impact of 'reading to learn' by extending it to language across the curriculum through exposing students to a variety of texts of different themes. Schools are also encouraged to leverage the advancement of technology to provide opportunities to read and write across the curriculum through the use of printed and multimodal texts to motivate students, broaden their knowledge and help them relate the language to different subjects.

Native English-speaking Teacher Scheme

There are about 400 Native English-speaking Teachers (NETs) working in secondary schools and over 450 NETs in primary schools. They work with local English teachers to enhance teaching and make English learning experiences more authentic and engaging for students. They help create a rich English language environment and promote the use of innovative teaching

strategies. The scheme as a whole improves classroom practices and students' attitude towards learning English.

Non-Chinese-speaking Students

The government encourages and supports the early integration of non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) students into the community, including helping them adapt to the local education system and master the Chinese language. The Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework helps primary and secondary NCS students overcome difficulties in learning Chinese as a second language and switch to mainstream Chinese Language classes. Schools receive funding to provide intensive Chinese language teaching and create an inclusive learning environment. Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) is offered at senior secondary level to provide an additional channel of obtaining an alternative Chinese language qualification. The results are reported in the HKDSE and the subject is pegged at Qualifications Framework levels 1 to 3 to prepare students for further studies and work. Complementary measures include enhancing teachers' capabilities in teaching Chinese as a second language and the provision of learning and teaching resources packages.

The Chinese Language Learning Support Centre offers support programmes for NCS students after school and during holidays. It also develops teaching resources and organises professional development workshops for teachers, and conducts workshops for parents to encourage parental support for their children to learn Chinese.

UGC-funded universities accept various Chinese Language qualifications under specified circumstances as alternatives to the HKDSE so that their applicants may meet the general entrance requirements under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System. These qualifications include the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), General Certificate of Education (GCE) AS-Level and GCE A-Level. Similar arrangements are available for admission to sub-degree programmes. NCS students taking these Chinese Language examinations pay subsidised fees which are the same as the HKDSE Chinese Language examination fee. Those with financial needs may further receive half or full remission of the subsidised examination fees.

The government works with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to hold district-based programmes, supported by the Language Fund, to motivate NCS children aged three to nine to learn Chinese through fun activities. For NCS school leavers, course providers started offering vocational Chinese Language courses pegged at level 1 or 2 of the Qualifications Framework in 2016.

Education of Students with Special Educational Needs

Students with more severe or multiple disabilities are referred to special schools for intensive support, subject to the assessment and recommendation of specialists and parents' consent. Others with special educational needs (SEN) will attend ordinary schools. As at September, there were 61 aided special schools, 21 of which had boarding facilities, providing about 8,900 school places and 1,100 boarding places. Some 45,360 students with SEN were studying in public-sector ordinary primary and secondary schools.

The government provides these schools with additional resources such as the Learning Support Grant, professional support and teacher training, to cater for students with SEN. Professional staff members from the bureau visit these schools regularly to advise on school policies and support measures in implementing integrated education. School-based educational psychologists and school-based speech therapists conduct assessment for students, and provide consultation and support services for schools.

Since September 2016, the government has extended the School-based Educational Psychology Service to all public-sector primary and secondary schools and progressively improved the ratio of educational psychologists to schools to 1:4 for schools with a large number of students with SEN. By the end of the 2016-17 school year, about 43 per cent and about 28 per cent of teachers in public-sector primary and secondary schools respectively had completed structured training programmes of 30 hours or more to strengthen their capacity to cater for students with SEN. The grant rates and the ceiling of the Learning Support Grant for schools are adjusted annually according to changes in the Composite Consumer Price Index. The ceiling of the grant is about \$1.61 million in 2017-18.

Over three years from 2017-18, the bureau will provide each public-sector ordinary primary and secondary school in phases with an additional teaching post, to which a teacher will be assigned as special educational needs coordinator to support integrated education.

The Endeavour Merit Award and Endeavour Scholarship recognise excellence in post-secondary students with SEN at publicly funded and self-financing institutions respectively.

Gifted students receive government help to develop their capabilities, including gifted development programmes that the bureau supports schools to design and implement. Learning and teaching resource packs are disseminated to schools and uploaded to the EDB website. Professional development programmes and teachers' networks equip teachers with knowledge and skills in gifted education. School networks at both primary and secondary levels promote professional exchanges and experience sharing among teachers in different schools. Territory-wide competitions provide platforms for students to learn from one another and to demonstrate their areas of strength. Outstanding students thus identified are provided with further training and nominated to take part in international competitions.

The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education, government subvented since September 2017, provides gifted students with courses, competitions, conferences, mentoring and online learning. It also offers professional development to teachers through thematic courses, lectures and outreach activities. Services for parents of gifted children include the Parent Education Programme, outreach, assessment and consultation.

Information Technology in Education

The government has been implementing the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education since August 2015. The major measure of setting up Wi-Fi on campus for some 1,000 public-sector and DSS schools will be basically completed in the 2017-18 school year. In sustaining the development, the government started providing from the same school year an

extra recurrent grant to all public-sector and DSS schools to strengthen their IT staffing support in e-learning and taking forward education initiatives which would harness IT.

Post-secondary Education

Hong Kong has 20 local degree-awarding post-secondary education institutions, eight of which are funded by the public through the UGC, namely the City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Lingnan University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Education University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the University of Hong Kong. The other 12 are the publicly funded HKAPA and the self-financing Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Centennial College, Chu Hai College of Higher Education, Gratia Christian College, Hang Seng Management College, HKCT Institute of Higher Education, Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, the Open University of Hong Kong, Tung Wah College and the VTC's Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong. Together with providers offering locally accredited sub-degree programmes, there are about 30 post-secondary institutions.

In 2017-18, the UGC-funded universities and the HKAPA together provided around 15,200 publicly funded, first-year-first-degree intake places, while self-financing undergraduate programmes offered about 9,060 places. The UGC-funded universities and the self-financing, degree-awarding institutions also provided around 4,800 senior-year undergraduate places and 9,700 top-up degree places respectively, mainly for sub-degree graduates. At sub-degree level, about 21,000 self-financing and 11,000 publicly funded intake places were available. At postgraduate level, the UGC-funded universities and the self-financing institutions provided about 40,000 taught postgraduate and 8,000 research postgraduate places.

The government strives to provide secondary school leavers with flexible, diversified pathways with multiple entry and exit points through promoting the quality and sustainable development of the publicly funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors. About 70 per cent of the relevant age cohort now have access to post-secondary education. Among them, 45 per cent have access to degree education, including 28 per cent enrolled in publicly funded undergraduate programmes.

Increasing Post-secondary Education Opportunities

The government promotes the sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary sector through a basket of support measures, including providing land and premises at nominal premium and rent, interest-free start-up loans, the \$3.52 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund, student finance, quality assurance subsidies and matching grants.

As at the end of 2017, about \$7.3 billion of start-up loans to post-secondary institutions out of a total \$9 billion commitment had been approved. Besides, about \$300 million of matching grants out of a commitment of up to \$500 million had been approved since the launch of the seventh Matching Grant Scheme in August.

The number of publicly funded undergraduate senior year places available at UGC-funded universities for sub-degree graduates is being increased by 1,000 between 2015-16 and 2018-

19. This offers more opportunities for such students to obtain a publicly funded degree education and fosters a flexible multi-entry post-secondary education framework.

On a pilot basis from 2015-16, the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors subsidises about 1,000 students per year to pursue designated full-time locally accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines. In 2018-19, the scheme will be regularised with the number of subsidised places increased to about 3,000 per cohort, and current students of the designated programmes will also start receiving the subsidy.

In the 2016-17 academic year, \$79.9 million in scholarships were awarded under the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund to 4,856 recipients and grants totalling more than \$22 million were approved for 10 projects under the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme.

Governance of Post-secondary Institutions

All UGC-funded universities, the Open University and the HKAPA are statutory bodies governed by their own ordinances. Nine approved post-secondary colleges are registered under and governed by the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance: the Caritas Institute of Higher Education, Centennial College, Chu Hai College, Gratia Christian College, Hang Seng Management College, HKCT Institute of Higher Education, Nang Yan College, Shue Yan University and Tung Wah College. Each post-secondary institution has its own structure of governance, normally including a governing body, called the council or board of governors, and a body to regulate academic affairs, called the senate or academic board.

Vocational and Professional Education and Training and Adult Education

Vocational Training Council

The VTC is a statutory body that offers vocational and professional education and training (VPET) for school leavers and adult learners. It provided some 250,000 full-time and part-time places during 2016-17.

Quality-assured, internationally recognised full-time and part-time courses up to master degree level are available for students completing Secondary 3 education or above, covering applied science, design, engineering, hotel operations, services and tourism, child care, elderly and community services, business, information technology and other study areas. The courses are offered through the VTC's 13 member institutions, such as the Hong Kong Design Institute, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, Institute of Professional Education and Knowledge, International Culinary Institute, Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong and Youth College. The VTC also administers an apprenticeship scheme and provides trade testing and certification.

Since 2014-15, the VTC has implemented a Pilot Training and Support Scheme with the government's funding support to attract and retain talent for industries with a keen demand for labour, by integrating structured apprenticeships with clear career progression pathways. It is expected to benefit 4,000 students across four cohorts. The VTC also receives recurrent funding to provide industrial attachment for about 9,000 students every year, mainly studying higher diploma programmes and certain Diploma of Vocational Education programmes.

Diploma Yi Jin Programme

The Diploma Yi Jin Programme provides an alternative channel for Secondary 6 school leavers and adult learners to earn a formal qualification for employment and continuing education purposes. It is run by seven self-financing institutions and may be taken either full-time or part-time. The 2017-18 enrolment exceeded 4,000 students.

Evening Secondary Courses

In 2017-18, about 1,100 adult students enrolled in evening secondary courses at designated centres operated by approved course providers under the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses.

Student Achievements

Hong Kong students excelled in international competitions in 2017. Hong Kong teams won a total of eight gold, 13 silver and six bronze medals in the International Mathematical Olympiad, International Physics Olympiad, International Olympiad of Metropolises, International Olympiad in Informatics and International Junior Science Olympiad.

In music, Hong Kong students won two gold awards and one bronze in the Singapore International Choral Festival; one third prize in the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod; one gold in the Australian International Music Festival; two golds in the Orientale Concertus X; two golds, a Special Prize for Excellent Piano Accompaniment and an Overall Best Choir Performance Award in the International Youth Music Festival; one third prize in the European Music Festival for Young People; and one first prize in the International Violin Competition Kulturstiftung Hohenlohe.

In visual arts, Hong Kong students won three grand prizes in the International Students' Visual Arts Contest-cum-Exhibition of Hong Kong, a Best Individual award in the Small Montmartre of Bitola, as well as a number of prizes in the International Children's Exhibition of Fine Arts Lidice and International Art Competition of the Joy of Europe.

In sports, Hong Kong students won 27 gold, 35 silver and 29 bronze medals at the Asian Rope Skipping Championships; one gold, two silvers and one bronze at the Asian Junior Squash Individual Championships; one gold and four bronzes at the All China Youth (U18) Athletics Championships; two golds and two bronzes at the Summer Universiade; first place at the Junior Girls' Singles of the ITTF World Junior Circuit Finals; and the second and third runner-up awards for five-a-side football and shuttlecock events at the National Youth 'Future Star' Sunshine Sports Games.

Qualifications and Quality Assurance

Qualifications Framework

The Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF), established under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance, provides a transparent and accessible platform to promote lifelong learning and enhance workforce competitiveness. It covers academic, VPET and continuing education qualifications. The QF is underpinned by a robust

quality assurance mechanism. All qualifications recognised under the framework are locally accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), established under the HKCAAVQ Ordinance, or by self-accrediting institutions in Hong Kong. The government maintains a web-based Qualifications Register, which lists the qualifications and their associated learning programmes recognised under the framework.

As at 2017, the government had helped 22 industries¹ set up Industry Training Advisory Committees under the QF, covering over 50 per cent of the labour force. A major task of each committee, which comprises industry stakeholders, is to draw up Specification of Competency Standards for its sector, setting out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in the sector's different functional areas, and enabling course providers to design training programmes to meet the sector's needs. These standards provide useful guides for the development of in-house training and human resources management.

The Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism under the QF enables practitioners to obtain formal recognition for the knowledge, skills and experience they acquire in the workplace, and facilitates further learning without the need to start from scratch. The QF also provides for credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) to further support learning pathways for learners, and helps education and training providers develop and refine their CAT systems.

To support sustainable development of the framework, the government operates the \$1 billion QF Fund to provide steady income for QF-related initiatives. According to the October 2017 Policy Address, the government plans to inject \$1.2 billion into this endowment fund.

In 2017, the government completed two referencing projects with the Scottish and Irish QFs to enhance collaboration with the HKQF.

Quality Assurance of Post-secondary Education

Two quality assurance bodies monitor the quality of the post-secondary education sector. The HKCAAVQ is the statutory body responsible for the quality assurance of all operators and programmes except the UGC-funded universities, which are self-accredited. The Quality Assurance Council (QAC), a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under the aegis of the UGC, conducts quality audits of the UGC-funded universities with a view to assuring the quality of all their programmes at the levels of sub-degree, first degree and above, however funded, is sustained, improved and internationally competitive.

The government works with the HKCAAVQ and QAC through the Liaison Committee on Quality Assurance to identify ways to enhance and rationalise the quality assurance required for the self-financing post-secondary regime.

¹ Printing and Publishing; Watch and Clock; Catering; Hairdressing; Property Management; Electrical and Mechanical Services; Jewellery; Information and Communications Technology; Automotive; Beauty; Logistics; Banking; Import and Export; Testing, Inspection and Certification; Retail; Insurance; Manufacturing Technology (Tooling, Metals and Plastics); Elderly Care Services; Security Services; Human Resources Management; Fashion and Arboriculture and Horticulture.

Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance

This ordinance regulates non-local courses of higher and professional education conducted in Hong Kong through a system of registration to ensure the standards of the courses and qualifications are comparable to those in their home countries. It protects Hong Kong consumers by guarding against the marketing of non-local courses which do not fulfil the registration criteria. As at end-September, 1,142 non-local courses were registered or exempted from registration under the ordinance.

More Funding Resources

Quality Education Fund

Up to end-August, the Quality Education Fund had approved about \$4.43 billion for 9,567 projects to raise the quality of school education and promote quality school education.

Life Planning Education

A recurrent Career and Life Planning Grant of about \$580,000 is disbursed to public-sector and DSS schools providing senior secondary education to implement life planning education to better prepare students for the transition from school to post-secondary education, including VPET, or the workplace and to make the best of opportunities ahead. From the 2016-17 school year, schools may opt for regular teaching posts instead of the grant to further consolidate their experiences with more stable teaching manpower.

The EDB encourages close collaboration between schools and various sectors to arrange opportunities for secondary students to explore and acquire first-hand experience about different trades and careers. Under the Business-School Partnership Programme, more than 270 businesses worked with the bureau to organise activities that drew some 277,000 students in 2016-17.

Support for Needy Students

In the 2017-18 school year, 902 schools and 169 NGOs received subsidies under School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes for organising activities to help about 190,000 eligible needy students improve their learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experiences outside the classroom and raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund, established by the bureau and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, allocated \$82 million to 935 participating schools in 2016-17. This helped about 210,000 students in need from Primary 1 to Secondary 6 to take part in activities organised or recognised by schools that fostered whole-person development.

Student Finance Office

To ensure no student is denied access to education because of a lack of means, the Student Finance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency provides means-tested and non-means-tested financial assistance at various study levels. The office also administers a number of scholarship schemes.

Financial Assistance for Pre-primary Education

Eligible children may enjoy non-means-tested fee subsidies under the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, and means-tested fee remission under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme. In the school year of 2016-17, fee subsidies and remission totalling around \$3.4 billion and \$616 million were granted to about 139,900 and 41,500 students respectively.

Financial Assistance for Primary and Secondary Education

At primary and secondary levels, means-tested assistance includes textbook assistance, travel subsidies, internet access subsidies and examination fee remission. In the school year of 2016-17, around \$817 million was disbursed to about 208,300 students to cover the costs of essential textbooks and miscellaneous school-related expenses, \$338 million to 144,400 students as travel subsidies, \$152 million to 133,700 families to subsidise internet access by students at home, and around \$34 million in examination fee remission for some 16,000 students sitting public examinations. The government also disbursed school-based and district-based grants to support the whole-person development of needy students.

Financial Assistance for Post-secondary Education

Means-tested grants and low-interest loans are offered to eligible full-time students pursuing eligible courses at UGC-funded or publicly funded institutions. In the academic year of 2016-17, some \$939 million of grants and \$211 million of loans were provided to about 23,400 students. Eligible students pursuing locally accredited, self-financing full-time post-secondary programmes are also eligible for means-tested grants and low-interest loans. In the 2016-17 academic year, some \$1,049 million of grants and \$180 million of loans were provided to around 20,200 students.

Non-means-tested loans operating on a no-gain-no-loss and full-cost-recovery basis are available to students pursuing eligible publicly funded or self-financing post-secondary programmes, and eligible professional or continuing education courses. In the 2016-17 academic year, more than 31,500 people received loans amounting to \$1,641 million.

Travel subsidies totalling around \$139 million were provided to about 37,400 students of post-secondary institutions.

Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong

From the 2017-18 academic year, the scheme provides a non-means-tested annual subsidy of \$30,000, subject to adjustment based on the Composite Consumer Price Index, to eligible students pursuing full-time, locally accredited local and non-local self-financing undergraduate studies, including top-up degree programmes, offered by eligible institutions. The subsidy applies to Hong Kong students who have attained '3322'² in the HKDSE when they enrol in the undergraduate programmes, and those with sub-degree qualifications when they enrol in relevant top-up degree programmes. The 15 eligible institutions include the nine approved

² '3322' refers to level 3 for Chinese Language and English Language and level 2 for Mathematics Compulsory Part and Liberal Studies.

post-secondary colleges registered under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance, the Open University, the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong and School for Higher and Professional Education under the VTC, Hong Kong Art School, Hong Kong Institute of Technology and Savannah College of Art and Design (Hong Kong). In the 2017-18 academic year, about 20,000 students are subsidised.

Tuition Fee Reimbursement for Diploma Yi Jin Programme and Evening Secondary Courses

Eligible students pursuing the Diploma Yi Jin Programme or designated evening secondary education courses may receive reimbursement of 30 per cent of the tuition fee. Those who pass a means test will be reimbursed a higher percentage.

Grants for Programmes Below Sub-degree Level

Students who are eligible to receive a full or half means-tested grant under the Student Finance Office and are pursuing eligible programmes below sub-degree level are entitled to reimbursement of all or half of the tuition fee respectively. For programmes of one year or longer, they may also receive all or half of the flat-rate academic expenses grant.

Mainland University Study Subsidy

The Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme was expanded in the 2017-18 academic year to provide, per year, a means-tested subsidy of up to \$15,000 and a non-means-tested subsidy of \$5,000 to eligible local students pursuing undergraduate studies in designated Mainland institutions. In the 2016-17 academic year, more than \$27 million was granted in subsidies to 2,190 students, and in the 2017-18 academic year, the scheme attracted about 3,400 applications for the two types of subsidy.

Scholarships

Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence

The Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme supports local students pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate studies outside Hong Kong. The scholarship is non-means-tested and covers up to \$250,000 of tuition fees per annum. Financially less well-off students may also apply for a means-tested bursary that provides up to \$200,000 per annum. The scheme benefits up to 100 students per cohort starting from 2015-16. As at December 2017, scholarships had been offered to 282 students, and scholarships and bursaries totalled \$88.7 million.

HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund and Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund

The \$2.27 billion HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund awards scholarships on a merit basis to outstanding locals and non-locals studying in full-time, publicly funded programmes at sub-degree and degree level or above in the eight UGC-funded universities, the HKAPA and the VTC. A \$3.52 billion Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund provides scholarships and awards to outstanding students pursuing full-time, locally accredited self-financing sub-degree or undergraduate programmes, and supports worthwhile initiatives to enhance self-financing post-secondary education. In 2016-17, the two funds distributed 10,149 scholarships and awards.

Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers

The government's Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers aims to attract people proficient in English to pursue local bachelor degree programmes and/or teacher training programmes majoring in English or a relevant subject which will qualify them to become English teachers on graduation.

Management of Schools

The Education Ordinance regulates school education services. Schools must comply with its provisions, including subsidiary legislation on the registration of schools, teachers and managers, health and safety requirements, fees and charges, and teacher qualifications.

To implement school-based management, aided schools are devolved with considerable autonomy and funding flexibility. In return, they have to be more transparent and accountable in their operation and include all key stakeholders in their governance structure, including representatives of the school sponsoring body, the principal, elected teachers, parents and alumni, and independent members.

The School Development and Accountability Framework seeks to foster sustained school development through school self-evaluation, complemented by external school reviews to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement from reviewers with perspectives across schools.

Professional Development of Educators

Teachers

The Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals advises the bureau on policies relating to the professional development of the teaching profession at different career stages and provides a platform for professional sharing, collaboration and networking.

The Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence (CEATE), organised by the bureau, aims to recognise accomplished teachers and foster a culture of excellence in the teaching profession. In 2016-17, 32 teachers received CEATE awards or certificates of merit.

The Hong Kong Teachers' Centre organises conferences, seminars, workshops and experience-sharing sessions to promote continuing professional development of teachers. It also arranges physical and mental health activities to help teachers maintain work-life balance.

The Council on Professional Conduct in Education, a non-statutory body, advises the government on measures to promote professional conduct in education and on alleged misconduct cases involving educators that are lodged with the council.

Principals

Professional development requirements are in place to help aspiring, newly appointed and serving principals enhance their leadership knowledge and address their developmental needs

at different career stages. Some 1,500 aspiring principals have attained the Certification for Principalship and about half of them have become principals.

School-based Support Services

School-based support services aim to foster leadership at schools, in particular at the middle managers' level, disseminate informed practices more widely to improve learning, teaching and assessment strategies in the classroom, and support professional learning among teachers. In 2016-17, the bureau provided school-based support services, including those financed by the Education Development Fund, to 293 secondary schools, 398 primary schools, 36 special schools, and 174 kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres.

Regional Education Offices also offer school-based support services to schools in response to the needs of students, teachers, schools and other stakeholders.

Community Participation in Education

Home-School Cooperation

The Committee on Home-School Cooperation encourages the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations. There are about 1,400 such associations. The bureau funded about 3,400 school-based and district-based home-school cooperation activities in 2016-17.

Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education

The committee advises the government on civic education, works with the government and other parties in arranging civic education activities, and sponsors community organisations to carry out projects to promote civic education outside school. It encourages a positive attitude towards life, cultivates an integrated and harmonious society, instils core civic values, and promotes understanding of the Basic Law and the Mainland. Those core values – 'Respect and inclusiveness', 'Responsibility' and 'Love' – are promoted to encourage mutual respect for people with different cultural backgrounds and points of view.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR and raise awareness of the Belt and Road Initiative, the committee promoted the message 'Foster a People-to-people Bond, Create a Better Future and Cheer for Hong Kong' in 2017. The Home Affairs Bureau and the committee rolled out again the Funding Scheme for Exchange in Belt and Road Countries to enable in-depth exchange between young Hong Kong people and their counterparts in the Belt and Road countries to foster 'people-to-people bonds'.

The committee's Civic Education Resource Centre at the Youth Square houses reference materials on civic education and youth development. It also organises training courses, seminars, sharing sessions, film shows, guided tours and periodic exhibitions.

Commission on Youth

The commission advises the government on youth matters, initiates studies on youth, promotes youth development, enhances communication between young people and the government,

and provides young people with internship opportunities on the Mainland and exchange opportunities on the Mainland and overseas.

The commission invites senior government officials, representatives from advisory bodies and renowned speakers to attend Youth Exchange Sessions so they can communicate directly with young people. The Youth Summit is held every two years as a platform for principal officials to exchange views with young participants.

At the government's invitation, the commission conducted a public engagement exercise on the future direction of youth development policy from May to October. Findings and recommendations of the exercise will form the basis of the work of the future Youth Development Commission, to be established in the first half of 2018.

In 2017, the commission also approved sponsorship under a Large-scale Youth Programme Funding Scheme for 10 youth programmes run by qualified organisations.

It sponsored another 282 exchange tours run by community organisations to enhance young people's understanding of the Mainland, strengthen their sense of national identity and foster exchanges with Mainland people; and 117 internship projects run by community organisations to foster understanding of the Mainland employment market, work culture and development opportunities. As part of the anniversary celebrations, the commission arranged for young people to visit Australia, Austria, Ireland, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and the US under a youth ambassador programme to broaden their outlook and world perspective. Young people from Australia, Ireland, Singapore and the US were hosted on reciprocal visits to Hong Kong.

During the year, the Youth Development Fund set up by the bureau and the commission provided matching grants to nine NGOs to carry out youth entrepreneurship projects, and to one NGO to hold innovative youth development activities. The NGOs are required to provide young entrepreneurs with financial help, mentorship and pre-entrepreneurship training, including matching them up with mentors with entrepreneurial knowledge and business experience, to develop their business resources and networks.

The commission works with the 18 District Youth Programme Committees to run cultural, arts, sports and general development activities for six- to 29-year-olds. Citywide projects include the Outstanding Youth Commendation Scheme and Outstanding Youth Activity Commendation Scheme. The Home Affairs Department coordinates district-level youth activities. Over 3,300 activities were organised in the summer with government funding and sponsorship from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

Space Sharing Scheme for Youth

This new scheme is implemented through a community-business-government tripartite partnership to provide a platform for owners of revitalised industrial and commercial buildings to contribute floor areas for the operation of co-working space or studios, to support start-ups of emerging industries and young people who are setting up their own businesses, and to support arts and cultural development. Participating owners rent out space to suitable NGOs at no more than one-third of the market rental or operate such space themselves. The operators

provide leasing options and support to start-ups, young entrepreneurs and artists at concessionary rents no higher than half of the market rental.

Thematic Youth Internship Programmes on Mainland

The HKSAR anniversary celebrations included two pioneer thematic internship programmes organised by the bureau at Palace Museum, Beijing, and Wolong National Nature Reserve, Sichuan Province, for 60 Hong Kong and Guangdong youths between July and August. The six-week programmes aimed to enhance the participants' knowledge of cultural heritage and nature conservation respectively, and to strengthen the exchange between Hong Kong youth and their Mainland counterparts.

Children's Rights

The Children's Rights Forum is a platform for children's organisations, children and the government to exchange views on matters that concern children. It relays children's views on government initiatives to the Family Council for consideration in assessing the impact of government policies on the family. In 2017, the Children's Rights Education Funding Scheme supported NGOs to conduct 30 projects to enhance understanding of children's rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Helping Ethnic Minorities Integrate into Community

The government commissions non-profit-making organisations to run six support service centres and two sub-centres for ethnic minorities, offering tailor-made classes, counselling and integration programmes. One of the centres also provides free language interpretation on the telephone to help ethnic minorities use public services. Two government-sponsored community support teams offer special services for ethnic minorities through members of their own communities.

In addition, the government funds radio programmes and publishes service guidebooks in a number of ethnic minority languages. District-based Integration Programmes help ethnic minorities better understand Hong Kong and encourage them to join community activities, the Ambassador Scheme introduces public services to ethnic minorities and makes referrals where necessary, and the Youth Ambassador Scheme reaches out to ethnic minority youths who are in need of services. A team of publicity officers who are familiar with ethnic minority cultures and languages conducts talks and exhibitions to promote racial harmony in the community.

Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony

The committee advises the government on the promotion of racial harmony and equality, including the provision of support services for ethnic minorities, and on proposals for race-related public education and publicity. Secretariat support is provided by the Home Affairs Department's Race Relations Unit.

Websites

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau: www.cmab.gov.hk

Education Bureau: www.edb.gov.hk

Home Affairs Bureau: www.hab.gov.hk

Home Affairs Department: www.had.gov.hk

Race Relations Unit: www.had.gov.hk/rru