

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON EDUCATION PROVISION IN HONG KONG**

### **Schools**

#### ***“All-graduate, all-trained” policy***

1.1 The Government adopted a policy in 1997 that all new primary and secondary school teachers should henceforth be degree graduates. Since that time, sub-degree pre-service teacher training places have been upgraded and replaced by places leading to the award of degrees. From 2004/05 onwards, all graduates of pre-service primary and secondary teacher education programmes have been degree holders.

#### ***Policy on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for serving teachers***

1.2 For teachers in public sector schools, the Education Bureau (EDB) has had a policy on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in place since 2003/04. Teachers are encouraged to attain a soft target of engaging in at least 150 hours of CPD over a three-year cycle, including both structured learning (such as seminars, conferences and staff development days), as well as other modes of learning such as collaborative practices, mentoring and professional reading.

1.3 School principals have been required since 2002 to engage in at least 150 hours of CPD over a three-year cycle in the three areas of: school administration and development; mentoring and networking; and leadership enhancement. The CPD activity is based on structured learning, action learning and service to education and the community.

#### ***Education of students with special educational needs (SEN)***

1.4 On the principle of “one curriculum framework for all”, students with special educational needs (SEN), like their able counterparts, follow the mainstream school curriculum and are offered essential life-long learning experiences. The Committee on Special Educational Needs (CSEN) under the Curriculum Development Council was established to develop this principle and is responsible for formulating policy and overseeing curriculum development for students with SEN. In this connection, various ad hoc committees have been set up to promote the following work:

- To develop programmes of study, learning objectives, learning and assessment exemplars for students with SEN;
- To conduct surveys in exploring the way ahead of curriculum reforms in special schools, to work in collaboration with schools on the development of school-based curriculum so as to enhance students' learning;
- To design and produce reference materials;
- To conduct seminars, workshops and experience sharing sessions for enhancing teachers' professionalism;
- To encourage schools to participate in the "Seed Project" on issues, which are in line with the aims of curriculum reform.

### *Kindergarten Education in Hong Kong<sup>1</sup>*

1.5 Kindergartens and kindergarten/child care centres registered with the Education Bureau provide education services for children from three to six years old. Kindergarten education in Hong Kong aims to lay the foundation of future learning through:

- nurturing children to attain all-round development in ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics;
- developing good habits so as to prepare them for life;
- stimulating children's interest in learning; and
- cultivating in them positive learning attitudes.

1.6 Since September 2003, all newly appointed kindergarten teachers have been required to possess a sub-degree level qualification as a Qualified Kindergarten Teacher (QKT). All new Principals are required to have a degree in Early Childhood Education [BEd(ECE)], one-year post-qualification experience and a recognized certificate course in principalship.

1.7 The Committee on Free Kindergarten Education has published its Report<sup>2</sup>, which deals with issues related to widening the availability and improving the quality of kindergarten education through enhancing the professionalism of kindergarten teachers. Included in the Committee's recommendations are that the Government should consider

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/overview/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> 'Children First: Right Start for All': Report of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education, May 2015 (<http://edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/kg-report/Free-kg-report-201505-Eng.pdf>) - see in particular Paragraph 4.7.

raising the entry qualification required of kindergarten teachers to degree level, that the Government should also study the issue of setting a graduate teacher ratio for each kindergarten when it reviews the future of kindergarten education after implementation of the Committee's recommendations and that more support should be provided for kindergarten teachers to upgrade their qualification. Such a development would clearly have implications for the teacher education institutions in Hong Kong.

## **Higher Education**

### *General Government's Policy on Teacher Education*

1.8 In 1997, the Chief Executive announced a long-term policy objective, "to require all new teachers to be trained graduates"<sup>3</sup>. A review on teacher education was conducted in 1998<sup>4</sup>. One of the major outcomes of the review was a recommendation that HKIEd should concentrate its efforts in developing areas where it already had identified strengths, i.e. in primary teacher education and pre-school teacher education and in language training for teachers. It should phase out its sub-degree Certificate of Education programmes and focus on providing undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education programmes. It should also continue to play an important role in providing in-service professional training and development programmes for serving teachers.

1.9 To ensure that all English and Putonghua teachers of primary and secondary schools possess at least the basic language proficiency, the Government, on the advice of the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualification (ACTEQ)<sup>5</sup>, introduced language proficiency requirements by advising that English and Chinese teachers holding a permanent post in a public-sector school or a local private primary/secondary day school offering a full curriculum from the

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 83 of the Chief Executive's Policy Address 1997 at <http://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/pa97/english/patext.htm>

<sup>4</sup> To support the Government's policy objective to upgrade the professional qualifications, education and training of primary and secondary school teachers and principals, the UGC made a number of recommendations and suggestions in the report regarding the upgrading of the teaching profession and the development of the HKIEd and other teacher education providers. The Government later endorsed the recommendations and set aside resources to develop HKIEd into a degree-awarding teacher-training institute and start progressively upgrading its sub-degree level teacher education places to degree or above levels. Details can be found at – <http://www.ugc.edu.hk/english/documents/triennium/english/5reviewofteacher/5reviewofteacher.html>

<sup>5</sup> ACTEQ was an advisory body under the Education Bureau. It was dissolved in 2013 and the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP) replaced it.

2000/01 school year should be required to meet the language proficiency requirements by the end of 2005/06 school year. This requirement sits alongside the fact that, since 2004/5, all graduates of pre-service teacher education training places for primary and secondary schools are required to hold a degree.

### ***Provision of Teacher Education Programmes in Hong Kong***

1.10 Five teacher education institutions (TEIs), namely the HKIEd, the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK), are the main providers of teacher education in Hong Kong. Apart from OUHK, which is self-financed, the other four TEIs are publicly funded institutions. In the 2014/15 academic year, as advised by the Government, there are 770 approved UGC-funded FYFD places allocated to teacher education programmes, and among the four UGC-funded TEIs, HKIEd is allocated 501 places (i.e. 65% of the FYFD places).

1.11 On teachers' qualifications, in general, graduates holding the following qualifications are qualified to become teachers in Hong Kong:

- (i) A bachelor degree in teacher education (i.e. BEd programme); or
- (ii) An undergraduate degree in programmes other than teacher education plus a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)

UGC-funded BEd programmes offered by the TEIs are full-time five-year programmes. Upon graduation, students are qualified as teachers in Hong Kong without the need to undertake any other teaching qualification programme. PGDE is a one-year full-time (or two-year part-time) programme. To be eligible for admission, students should hold a recognized bachelor degree, which includes a field of study relevant to their chosen teaching subject. PGDE prepares university graduates to become qualified teachers in Hong Kong. It provides opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of fully qualified teachers, and an understanding of the responsibilities and obligations of the teaching profession.

1.12 In-service teachers are also provided with professional development, which does not lead to formal academic qualifications. Professional upgrading courses are available with HKIEd as the major provider.

## *Teacher Education as a Manpower-planned Programme*

1.13 In Hong Kong, the numbers of UGC-funded student places at various levels of study (i.e. sub-degree, undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate) are decided by the Government. While institutions have flexibility to allocate places across programmes according to their own criteria, the Government offers advice to the UGC on certain disciplines and professions where the public sector is the major employer or where there is a strong case for assured provision. The advice is conveyed to the UGC-funded institutions in the context of the Academic Development Proposals (ADP) for a specific triennium<sup>6</sup>. Areas with specific manpower requirements include teachers, medical doctors, nurses, traditional Chinese medicine practitioners, dentists and other allied health professionals.

1.14 Against the above, the provision of teacher education places for the four UGC-funded TEIs is subject to the specific manpower planning requirements of the Government. When determining the numbers, the Government takes into account a number of factors such as the current number of teachers, projected demand for teachers (which in turn is affected by the projected school student population), demands for teachers in specific key learning areas, and anticipated needs in upgrading existing teachers in the coming years.

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<sup>6</sup> Funding allocation to the UGC-funded institutions is normally conducted on a triennial cycle basis.