

## **PART FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 TASKS**

4.1.1 The Review Group has been asked to undertake the following tasks:

1. To advise the Government, in the light of the community's needs and the promotion of excellence in the higher education sector, and having regard to the Government's decision on the institutional development of The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) on 23 June 2009<sup>54</sup>, the Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) Report on HKIEd issued by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) in July 2014, as well as any other evidence that may be obtained through a special review on HKIEd, on:

(a) HKIEd's progress in developing into a multi-disciplinary institution with a focus on teacher education and a good spread of other complementary disciplines and implementing the recommendations made in the University Grants Committee (UGC)'s Report of the Review Group on Hong Kong Institute of Education's Development Blueprint published in February 2009;

(b) Whether HKIEd should be granted self-accrediting status in the programme areas covered by its existing PAA status, having regard to the quality of the relevant programmes and in terms of both teaching and research performance;

(c) Whether HKIEd already possesses the qualities and attributes commonly expected of a university and should be granted the university title at this juncture;

(d) Whether there are any other actions HKIEd should take in future to further its role and improve the quality of education it provides.

2. To bring to the Government's attention issues of concern, if any, in relation to HKIEd's application for university title.

---

<sup>54</sup> Legislative Council Brief - Institutional Development of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (Annex B to this report). It can also be found at [http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/press/legco/others/legco%20brief%20on%20hkied%20development%20\\_eng\\_.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/press/legco/others/legco%20brief%20on%20hkied%20development%20_eng_.pdf)

## 4.2 REVIEW CRITERIA AND REVIEW GROUP FINDINGS

4.2.1 Part Three sets out in detail the criteria adopted by the Review Group in each of seven areas and its findings in each of these areas as follows:

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>REVIEW GROUP FINDINGS</b>
<p><b>1. VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION</b></p> <p>Criterion 1.1: Institutional vision and mission are appropriate and clearly articulated</p> <p>Criterion 1.2: Staff and students understand and accept the mission</p>	<p>The vision, mission, aims and objectives of HKIED are appropriate and sustainable. 'Education-plus' as a concept is widely understood by staff and students, serves as a guiding concept in institutional development and, importantly, is shown to be sustainable. Communication of the vision and mission to external audiences would benefit from further clarification.</p>
<p><b>2. ACADEMIC BREADTH AND SUBJECT COMPLEMENTARITY</b></p> <p>Criterion 2.1: The range of disciplines which currently constitute the academic offerings of HKIED is appropriate to its mission</p> <p>Criterion 2.2: Complementary disciplines developed since 2009 meet stakeholder expectations of their having been chosen strategically and of their success in enhancing teacher education in Hong Kong</p>	<p>HKIED meets expectations of academic breadth. The development of complementary disciplines takes into account their potential contributions to the enhancement of teacher education and educational practice in Hong Kong. Choices of discipline have been consistent with the 2009 Review Group Report.</p>

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>REVIEW GROUP FINDINGS</b>
<p><b>3. GOVERNANCE</b></p> <p>Criterion 3.1: Inclusive academic planning and management processes, which facilitate the implementation of HKIEd's mission</p> <p>Criterion 3.2: Robust and effective financial planning and resource allocation</p>	<p>HKIEd demonstrates robust governance of its academic activities. It has implemented decision-making practices that incorporate participation by various campus constituencies and external stakeholders, allowing for oversight and for feedback to its benefit. Strong financial planning and transparent resource allocation have allowed HKIEd to build on opportunities, such as the expansion of its international activities.</p>
<p><b>4. ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE</b></p> <p>Criterion 4.1: Academic standards are appropriate and rigorous</p> <p>Criterion 4.2: Quality Assurance is integral to HKIEd's academic activities, including quality enhancement based on QA outcomes</p>	<p>Academic standards set by HKIEd and attained by its students are appropriate to a higher education institution of good standing. Traditional indicators of student quality (e.g. examination scores and class standing) are comparable to students enrolled in teacher education programmes in other universities in Hong Kong. Employer satisfaction with graduates is strong. Exemplary quality assurance processes and procedures are fit for purpose, with assessment output used to enhance practice.</p>
<p><b>5. RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CAPACITY</b></p> <p>Criterion 5.1: Research and</p>	<p>Investment from 2009 onwards in</p>

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>REVIEW GROUP FINDINGS</b>
<p>scholarly activity are fostered and supported among academic staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students</p> <p>Criterion 5.2: Research draws on academic strengths from across HKIED and contributes to innovation in curriculum design and content</p>	<p>boosting research capabilities and capacity within HKIED has brought significant dividends in terms of research outcomes and of an enhancement of the quality of the student experience. Research quality trend indicators (e.g., HKIED's RAE 2014 performance; the increasing number and success of RGC applications between 2009 and 2015) demonstrate a growth in the research engagement and strength of Academic and Academic Supporting staff. Collaboration across disciplinary boundaries in key areas such as Special Education is evident. HKIED has enhanced the research capacities of students by broadening their participation in courses and projects, both in Education and in the complementary disciplines.</p>
<p><b>6. ACADEMIC AND ACADEMIC SUPPORTING STAFF</b></p> <p>Criterion 6.1: A significant proportion of the Academic and Academic Supporting staff have gained higher degrees/doctorates or equivalent qualifications and actively contribute to the advancement of knowledge in their fields</p> <p>Criterion 6.2: A coherent and comprehensive strategy for staff recruitment, development and retention</p>	<p>HKIED has provided sound evidence on the quality of its staff. It has successfully recruited doctorally qualified staff at a variety of levels. Recent rankings indicate that recognition of the quality of its research is spreading from the local to regional and international arenas. Academic staff members indicate a commitment to remain at HKIED, with positive retention data as illustration. Workload is planned and negotiated in a systematic way</p>

CRITERIA	REVIEW GROUP FINDINGS
	to ensure that staff have time to pursue scholarly endeavours. Student evaluations and external assessment indicate satisfaction with the quality of teaching.
<p><b>7. RESOURCES AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES</b></p> <p>Criterion 7.1: Campus resources (financial, physical, IT, library) are well managed and are appropriate, given HKIEd's aims and objectives for its future development</p> <p>Criterion 7.2: Systems and services provide support for both teaching and research</p>	<p>Adequacy of resources and a flexible support structure for teaching and research are evident in HKIEd. Improvements to existing facilities and new building projects are scheduled. Planning is underway to ensure that HKIEd keeps pace with changes in teaching and research that require ongoing upgrades in library facilities, educational technology and in computing resources and support.</p>

### 4.3 DISCHARGING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### a) HKIEd's progress since 2009

To assess HKIEd's progress in developing into a multi-disciplinary institution with a focus on teacher education and a good spread of other complementary disciplines and implementing the recommendations made in the University Grants Committee (UGC)'s Report of the Review Group on Hong Kong Institute of Education's Development Blueprint published in February 2009

4.3.1 HKIEd has made commendable progress since 2009 in developing into a multi-disciplinary institution. Its traditional strength in teacher education has broadened to reflect the wider development of Education as an important professional field. That strength has been enhanced through the successful development of complementary disciplines. In addition, the Institute has rapidly developed its research

capabilities, using the funding and other support made available to it to build a solid foundation for further growth in its research activity

**RECOMMENDS** that the UGC note the satisfactory progress made by HKIEd since 2009 in developing into a successful multi-disciplinary institution.

#### 4.3.2 Evidence of this progress includes the following:

- 'Education-plus' and the related common curricular framework being firmly embedded within HKIEd, allowing cross-fertilisation between Education and the complementary disciplines developed since 2009. Examples of cross-disciplinary synergies made possible by Education-plus include the use of Education as a lens for understanding and imparting the impact of environmental changes in Hong Kong, as well as enhancements to the teaching of students with special educational needs through research in clinical and cognitive psychology;
- The use of resources for research support provided since 2009 to recruit a cohort of research-active staff and postgraduate research students. A lively research-based culture is emerging, with the quest for research impacts and outcomes permeating activities throughout the Institute. Performance in the RAE 2014 and in competition for Research Grants Council awards reflects these developments;
- Strengthened governance, given impetus by the investment in new disciplines and in research capacity and reflected in the improved financial position of the Institute;
- Increased internationalisation, reflected in study abroad opportunities for students, support for staff to participate in activities such as conferences worldwide and working with peer institutions globally on activities such as benchmarking. The significant uplift in the international standing of HKIEd stems in part from such activities;
- In overall terms, the maturity of HKIEd as an institution in which high quality teaching flourishes and research is growing in strength.

## b) Self-accreditation in the 2014 PAA subject areas

Whether HKIED should be granted self-accrediting status in the programme areas covered by its existing PAA status, having regard to the quality of the relevant programmes and in terms of both teaching and research performance

4.3.3 HKIED has had the authority to self-accredit the courses it offers in Education since 2004. As such courses constitute the major part of the Institute's activities, the Review Group considers that the processes and structures in place to satisfy external scrutiny by the QAC are as mature and well-founded as in the other UGC-funded institutions in Hong Kong. In view of this maturity and of the ample evidence of high quality teaching and research performance as detailed below, the Review Group

**RECOMMENDS** to the UGC that HKIED be granted self-accrediting status in the three programme areas covered by its existing PAA status.

4.3.4 Evidence to support this recommendation includes the following:

- The effectiveness of quality assurance in HKIED, reflecting more than a decade of self-accreditation in its main discipline area of Education, as well as five years of working with HKCAAVQ in new programme areas, as reflected in the PAA re-accreditation in July 2014. Quality assurance processes are thorough, with minor improvements recommended in the PAA Report having been implemented;
- The quality of teaching and learning overall, resulting in well-qualified graduates from the new programme areas, with a breadth of skills welcomed by employers;
- The development of research capabilities in the complementary disciplines, increasingly recognised by external peers.

## c) Grant of University title

Whether HKIED already possesses the qualities and attributes commonly expected of a university and should be granted the university title at this juncture

4.3.5 Awarding the right to use the title “University” is not an action to be taken lightly. There are rigorous expectations of an

institution with university title, both from the global academic community and also from the local community within which it is based. Hong Kong has a distinguished record in relation to its universities, with high expectations in relation to their academic standards, quality of governance, approaches to teaching and learning, research productivity and capacity and their commitment to public service.

4.3.6 One question considered by the Review Group in responding to the terms of reference was "Does the community of academic institutions that it seeks to join acknowledge HKIEd as a worthy peer with a vision and mission which command their respect?" Responses from external stakeholders plus a judgment based on the evidence seen by the Review Group make the answer to the question an unequivocal "yes".

4.3.7 The Review Group considers that HKIEd already possesses the qualities and attributes commonly expected of a university. It is fully worthy of joining the ranks of the other UGC-funded universities in Hong Kong and sharing their status as institutions with full powers of self-accreditation. The Review Group

**RECOMMENDS** to the UGC that HKIEd should be granted university title at this juncture.

4.3.8 Evidence to support this recommendation includes the following:

- A coherent vision and mission, understood by staff and students, with Education at its core and with 'Education-plus' providing a sound base for further development;
- Breadth of academic provision, achieved through the development of self-standing programme areas which are complementary to Education;
- Governance structures and processes appropriate to a well-managed university;
- Exemplary QA, with external peer involvement in process review, supporting a culture of continuous quality improvement in the Institute;
- Staff and students at different levels are involved in research and scholarly activities, with outputs of good external standing;
- High academic standards, seen in the externally-validated quality of teaching, in the quality of graduates and reflected in employer satisfaction;



- Administrative and other support services which are fit for purpose and appropriately flexible in dealing with the changing environments in teaching and learning and in research.

**d) Other actions to be recommended to HKIED**

Whether there are any other actions HKIED should take in future to further its role and improve the quality of education it provides.

4.3.9 The Review Group considers that HKIED would benefit from taking action in a small number of areas. Details of its suggestions are contained in **Part Five**.

4.3.10 The Review Group was also asked in its terms of reference, “to bring to the Government’s attention issues of concern, if any, in relation to HKIED’s application for university title”. The Review Group is happy to report that no issues of concern have arisen.