

CHAPTER 4

THE FUTURE OF HKIED

4.1 Having examined HKIED's Blueprint, its 2009-12 *Academic Development Proposal*, and other supplementary information provided by the Institute, and speaking with the Institute's management team, the Review Group believes that HKIED has the capacity to expand and develop in research and other disciplines if it chooses to take such opportunity. However, more work needs to be done in these areas and enhancing Teacher Education quality should be at the centre of each of these developments.

4.2 HKIED recognizes the need to review the mode of training teachers, especially the future of a stand-alone BEd. The way forward proposed in the Blueprint is the introduction of double degrees in almost all subject offerings. For reasons explained in previous chapters, the Review Group has considerable concerns about HKIED's readiness and the impact of offering large numbers of double degrees on its staff and resources. Also important, HKIED lacks the authority to award such degrees at present.

4.3 Further, the Review Group believes that HKIED should review its current and proposed institutional profile, giving consideration to creating a greater balance among programmes designed for different teaching levels: early childhood, primary and secondary. Some future growth at secondary level could offer the benefit of a more holistic educational framework for students and researchers.

4.4 The supplementary material on research developments at HKIED suggests that planning is on track in the areas of research support for new research staff and a framework to measure research performance has been developed. The challenge of changing the culture of an entire institution cannot be under-estimated. Key areas of difficulty in the early stages include balancing time demands for teaching and research, incorporating research supervision into teaching load allocations, performance evaluation for research and teaching, attitudes of teaching and research-only staff, and the cost of engaging in research with its impact on students and colleagues. For most transformed monotechnic education institutions, the transformation into a multidisciplinary institution typically preceded the requirement to develop a research culture that came with university status. A further complication for HKIED is that it faces both of these demanding

changes during the timeframe for the introduction of the system-wide transformation associated with “3+3+4”.

4.5 Transformed along the lines suggested by the Review Group, HKIED would offer a broadened scope of academic disciplines, while continuing to focus on its core Education programmes. We would anticipate particular strengths in early childhood and primary education, expansion in secondary education, postgraduate activities in provision of Postgraduate Diploma in Education, continuing professional development of teachers and expanding research programmes at the doctoral level. All of these changes are consistent with the proposals put forward by HKIED in its Blueprint and other supporting materials.

4.6 HKIED is encouraged to pursue the proposals set out in its Blueprint to enhance the quality of Teacher Education, including support for research-based teaching, the provision of resources for whole-person development and the greater provision of an overseas experience for students.

4.7 If HKIED decides to pursue plans set out in the Blueprint to develop the mainly non-award-rewarding self-financing and regional activities, it will need to take account of the impact of these initiatives on the staff and other resources available for planning and prioritizing the major research and disciplinary developments and expansion of its degree-level programmes.

TYPE OF INSTITUTION

4.8 Through the Blueprint, other supporting materials, and in discussion with the Review Group, HKIED has demonstrated a commendable desire for institutional improvement. This is consistent with the development path of HKIED since the 1990s.

4.9 To help HKIED move forward, the Review Group proposes that the Institute should expand its degree-level student load, research capability and discipline base. We understand that HKIED wishes to retain its core identity with the discipline of Education, in an expanded and enhanced context.

4.10 The Review Group believes that the inclusion of other disciplines at HKIEd will enrich the teaching, learning and research environment and provide flexible academic and career pathways for its students. We are confident that, appropriately planned, the Institute can develop strategies to ensure that such disciplinary expansion does not undermine educational coherence or deflect resources and focus from its academic goals.

4.11 The Review Group does not believe that it is desirable to expand HKIEd into a comprehensive institution such as HKU or CUHK, which have professional faculties as well as programmes in most recognized disciplines. Such a development would, at this juncture, bring costly and unnecessary duplication in the Hong Kong higher education sector.

4.12 The Review Group is well aware that HKIEd wishes to follow a path that leads to university status. For this reason, we considered the attributes generally demonstrated by higher education institutions in a number of relevant jurisdictions that carry the name ‘university’ (see paragraph 3.15 above and our further research findings concerning the attributes of a university at **Annex F**). Clearly, HKIEd does not have those attributes at this time. However, the Review Group believes that by implementing the proposals set out in this Report, HKIEd can strengthen its case for a re-consideration at some point in the future for university title. More importantly, these developments would provide a richer learning environment, broaden research opportunities, provide access to more diverse programmes and greater flexibility and career pathways for students. A further benefit would be the promotion of excellence in Hong Kong’s higher education sector.

THE INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION OPTION

4.13 As our review of world-wide developments of Teacher Education institutions has shown (Chapter 2), most cases of upgrading of Teacher Education involved mergers with other monotechnic or multidisciplinary institutions. Such mergers and other forms of institutional integration have been expressed through the formation of faculties of Education or other federated structures that allow Education academics to pursue discipline-specific goals within a broader scholarly setting. Many leading Teacher Education institutions have emerged from such a process, including the Teachers College at Columbia University, Peabody College at Vanderbilt University and the Institute of Education at the University of London. In their promotional material, these

Education-focused institutions advertise the benefits to their students of access of a multidisciplinary university and reciprocal benefits to the students of the partner university.

4.14 The key features of institutional integration in the case of HKIED would be:

- the opportunity to retain its specific Education focus and develop the Institute into a widely recognised specialist Education institution;
- the opening of access to an array of established, accredited, academic disciplines to enrich Education programmes;
- the provision of more academic pathways and career opportunities for students;
- inclusion in an active research community with opportunities for interdisciplinary research; and
- attainment of university status for its Education programmes, staff and students in a relatively short time frame.

4.15 In addition, any arrangement between HKIED and a partner university would provide relief from the funding and load pressures of a monotechnic institution. The development of interdisciplinary programmes would also help buffer Education-specific downturns in demand, and provide support during periods of growing Education enrolments.

4.16 HKIED would bring a unique set of educational products to a partner university and would in turn benefit from the economies of scale and previous experience and reputation of the partner university in the self-financing and global markets. The integration option would also provide the Institute with a stronger platform from which to more rapidly meet its international and export aspirations.

4.17 Compared to developing into a stand-alone multidisciplinary institution, partnership with an established university would allow HKIED to implement the majority of this Report's proposals while pursuing its own Education-focused goals in a relatively short time frame and at a reduced cost to the Hong Kong community.

4.18 While this option would improve Teacher Education in Hong Kong and meet many goals, it is clear that such a development would depend on a willing partnership which could identify advantages for both parties.

THE STAND-ALONE OPTION

4.19 In Hong Kong and elsewhere in the world, there are several types of multidisciplinary institutions. Some reflect a generalist, liberal arts approach. In Hong Kong, this description might aptly be applied to HKBU and LU. Another type of multidisciplinary institution is one that has built a number of disciplines around a more focused area, such as HKUST.

4.20 HKIED could address all of the recommendations in this Report to strengthen the institution and Teacher Education in Hong Kong by developing into an Education-focused, multidisciplinary institution with research capability. With this option, HKIED could work toward a unique and distinctive vision. The new institution could add value to the Hong Kong higher education sector if it develops in a planned and coherent manner. Such planning must take account of the education needs of Hong Kong as well as the academic, research and employment opportunities for its students.

4.21 A planned and coherent broadening of HKIED does not preclude meaningful collaborations with other institutions in Hong Kong and elsewhere. Indeed, existing and future collaborations are to be encouraged, for they can enrich academic programmes, particularly in new and expanding discipline areas, while avoiding costly duplication.

4.22 The Review Group proposes that if the stand alone option is chosen, HKIED would be expected to develop into an institution offering a good spread (for example, at least three) of discipline areas in addition to Education. This prerequisite of a minimum discipline spread in the academic footprint of a university reflects established practices in other jurisdictions, including Mainland China.

4.23 While it is difficult to define an academic discipline in precise terms, the Review Group intends that a discipline area (such as Humanities, Creative Arts, Social Sciences, Information Technology, Health Studies, Management and Administration Studies, *etc.*) would require a fully fledged department that could offer one or preferably more major

concentrations for a stand-alone degree. Since the spread should be in areas with some coherence for Education, we would not envisage such discipline areas as Engineering, Dentistry, Law, Architecture *etc.*

4.24 It is intended that the new disciplines should provide adequate academic and professional coverage to allow students to pursue non-Teacher Education degrees. In identifying new discipline areas, HKIED will need to consider:

- How the new discipline will contribute to its programmes in Teacher Education;
- Its existing strengths;
- What sub-disciplines (other than Education-linked) will be represented at HKIED;
- Employment opportunities for students on graduation;
- Avoidance of inappropriate overlap with other Hong Kong universities; and
- Opportunities for teaching and research collaborations with other universities in the new discipline(s).

4.25 There are many international examples of successful expansion paths followed by previously monotechnic institutions. These include the development of undergraduate and research programmes focused on interdisciplinary areas, emerging careers and professions, and distinctive approaches to traditional disciplines. Synergies between and among the disciplines chosen could lead to the highly efficient utilization of staff and other resources, providing HKIED students with a rich academic environment. The number of disciplines offered and the depth of study available can in part build on the existing strengths and interests of HKIED staff, and lead to valuable collaborations with other higher education institutions. The directions taken will reflect the emphasis chosen by HKIED in relation to interdisciplinarity, career orientation, pure and/or applied approaches to research and teaching and community needs.

Recommendation 3

That HKIEd should seek to implement the proposals set out in this Report by one of two options:

- (a) develop into a multidisciplinary institution with a focus on Education and other complementary disciplines, primarily offering undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes and undertaking research and research training; or**
- (b) partner with an existing university in order to provide a multidisciplinary learning and research environment and flexible career pathways for its students while developing other proposals that are congruent with the mutually agreed development plans of HKIEd and the partner university.**