

Appendix H: Background of the Research Grants Council Visiting Programme

As part of the process of evaluating the research performance and capabilities of Hong Kong's higher education institutions, the Council agreed in 1992 to begin a programme of visits to the UGC-funded institutions. The main purposes of the visits are to allow Council and panel members to:

- ◆ familiarise themselves with the institutions' academic and contract research activities, whether funded by the Council or otherwise;
- ◆ inspect research facilities, equipment and projects, particularly those funded by the Earmarked Research Grant, in situ;
- ◆ be briefed in more detail on selected on-going or recently completed Council-funded projects; and
- ◆ meet with and talk to academic staff and students about their research activities.

At the Council meeting in June 1994, the Council reviewed the format and contents of the visits, and considered they were important and useful to help Council / panel members to maintain close contacts with the institutions as well as academic staff and

students engaged in research.

Each year, the Council and panel members visit one of the eight UGC-funded institutions in Hong Kong. The visits provide opportunities for the members to hold informal and open discussions at all levels. The talks are not intended to be forums for discussing resource allocation, either generally or for specific projects, so formality is kept to the minimum.

Visits to facilities / projects and discussions with staff and students are normally undertaken in small groups. The visiting team, split broadly on the basis of subject panel groups, visits departments, laboratories and any other special facilities relating to their subject areas. Members are briefed on the progress of some selected on-going research projects and meet staff and research students separately.

Under the programme, the Council began its third round of visits in 1998, revisiting City University of Hong Kong in June 1998, The University of Hong Kong in 1999, and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 2000.