

## ***Chapter 8 – Communication and Correspondence***

### *Introduction*

8.1 The UGC is the principal channel of communication between the Government and the UGC-funded institutions. The UGC communicates with the Government mainly through the Education Bureau (EDB) and the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau. While the Secretariat, as a Government department, comes under the policy and housekeeping responsibility of the EDB, Secretary-General and Secretariat staff are responsible to the UGC for the operation of the Secretariat. The Secretary-General is the Controlling Officer of Head 190 University Grants Committee and is accountable for expenditure under this Head.

8.2 As set out in General Regulations 760 to 762, Government bureaux and departments may have direct contact with the institutions on matters which are their direct responsibility. These matters normally cover the following areas:

- (a) legislative matters regarding the institutions' ordinances;
- (b) performing functions and exercising powers as provided for in the institutions' ordinances;
- (c) land matters;
- (d) contracts for services rendered;
- (e) course/programme commissioning (other than the ones which are totally self-financed);
- (f) formulation and implementation of education policies; and
- (g) implementation of Government's statutory functions.

Where appropriate and particularly on matters which are likely to have funding implications for the institutions, the UGC should be kept informed and/or be consulted before final decisions are taken.

8.3 Government Secretariat Bureaux and Departments may have specific requests for the institutions to provide academic courses or training to meet specific manpower needs, and they may discuss possibilities for such courses or training informally with individual institutions. However, any formal request for the introduction of an academic course or a training programme which affect UGC student number targets may only be made to SED in the first instance, and should be copied to

the UGC Secretariat and the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau. SED shall then decide whether such request should be formally conveyed to the UGC.

8.4 Informal contacts, sounding-out sessions, exchanges of information, etc. between individuals or groups in the institutions and Government officers, on a wide range of subjects, are of course inevitable and acceptable. It is, however, essential to keep in mind whether and when the UGC should be brought in. In case of doubt, it is always preferable to err on the side of caution and involve the UGC sooner rather than later.

8.5 It must be recognised that the UGC, as an independent advisory body, may take a different position from the Government and the institutions. It cannot therefore be assumed that the UGC will automatically support either party.

### *Incoming Correspondence*

8.6 Official correspondence addressed to the Chairman of the UGC should normally be addressed to him/her c/o UGC Secretariat. Since such correspondence will be opened by staff of the UGC Secretariat first, before submission to the Chairman with comments/ recommendations for action as appropriate, correspondence intended for the Chairman's eyes only should either be addressed to him/her at his/her private office or clearly marked "Personal and Confidential" (or both). In the case of letters addressed to the Chairman at the UGC Secretariat, a photocopy goes to the Chairman while the original is retained for filing.

8.7 All other correspondence to the UGC should be addressed to the Secretariat. The UGC Secretariat is a Government office and all correspondence normally goes on official files. It will therefore be dealt with regardless of how it is addressed, although letters addressed personally to the Secretary-General or other Secretariat officers (either by title or by name) will be seen by the officer concerned personally first.

8.8 If the correspondence is intended for distribution to UGC members, then sufficient copies should be provided to the UGC. The number of required copies will normally be specified by a letter calling for such documents. Every effort will be made to keep the number to a minimum. This is however only essential if large reports or similar documents are intended for circulation to members. This requirement will usually have been specified in the letters calling for such reports.

### *Electronic Mail*

8.9 The UGC Secretariat may be contacted via e-mail for purposes of informal communications and exchanges of views/information. The e-mail addresses of Secretariat staff will be separately notified to the institutions and Government Bureaux/Departments as required. Formal correspondence should, however, normally be sent to the Secretariat by mail or fax.

### *UGC Website*

8.10 The UGC also disseminates much information through its web site [www.ugc.edu.hk](http://www.ugc.edu.hk).

### *Contact List*

8.11 The UGC Secretariat has produced, in consultation with the institutions, a contact list of the UGC Secretariat and UGC-funded institutions by subject and by institution. The list is distributed among the UGC Secretariat and the institutions. It is updated regularly by the UGC Secretariat based on the information provided by the institutions.