

PART TWO: PUTTING THE REVIEW IN CONTEXT

2.1 PREAMBLE AND BACKGROUND

The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd)

2.1.1 The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) was formally established in 1994¹ following the amalgamation of a number of teacher education institutions. It came under the aegis of the University Grants Committee (UGC) in 1996 and has been offering publicly funded bachelor and taught postgraduate degrees since 1998. In 2002, it began offering sub-degree programmes. It is the only institution in Hong Kong with a primary focus on teacher education. Starting in 2010 and with a view to becoming a multi-disciplinary institution, HKIEd has offered a small number of non-teacher education programmes, as well as research postgraduate programmes with additional resources provided by the Government. Some general background information on the education landscape in Hong Kong, including kindergarten education, school education and higher education is set out in **Annex F**.

UGC Institutional Review of HKIEd in 2003

2.1.2 In 2003, on completion of the Teaching and Learning Quality Process Review (TLQPR), HKIEd submitted a formal request for the UGC to conduct an institutional review to assess whether the Institute was ready for self-accrediting status². A Review Panel comprising local members and overseas experts was formed, which subsequently recommended granting self-accrediting status to HKIEd for the programmes on offer in the Institute at the time, which were exclusively in the field of teacher education. This recommendation was endorsed by the UGC and then approved by the Government in 2004.

¹ In its Fifth Report, the Education Commission recommended the amalgamation of Northcote College of Education, Sir Robert Black College of Education, Grantham College of Education, Hong Kong Technical Teachers' College and the Institute of Language in Education to become an autonomous HKIEd.

² In Hong Kong, currently, the eight UGC-funded institutions enjoy either full or, in the case of HKIEd, limited self-accrediting status and may accredit their own programmes at degree or above levels, provided that the institution has an enduring commitment to quality, a sound quality assurance mechanism and processes to ensure quality of its programmes and graduates. HKIEd was granted full status on its teacher education programmes in 2004 but has been required to seek external accreditation for non-teacher education programmes introduced from 2010 onwards. This dual position - of having self-accrediting status for teacher education (which makes up the bulk of its programmes and student numbers) but not for other programmes - sets it apart from the other UGC-funded institutions, which have full self-accrediting status for all of their programmes. In order to launch and operate the non-teacher education courses, HKIEd is required to seek programme validation and accreditation from the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation on Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ).

Review of HKIEd's Development Blueprint in 2009

2.1.3 In June 2007, HKIEd submitted its 'Development Blueprint: Becoming a University of Education' (referred to as the 'Development Blueprint'), which put forward a number of proposals for its future development, including the transformation of the Institute into a university specialising in Education. At the request of the Government, the UGC formed a Review Group in August 2007 to undertake a comprehensive review of the Institute. The Review Group adopted a broad approach in its examination of HKIEd's Development Blueprint and of the institution's capacity, especially its academic and research strengths. Its approach included laying out the possible pathways which the Institute might follow to become a university.

2.1.4 The Review Group completed the review and submitted its Report to the UGC and subsequently to the Government in early 2009. The Report concluded that, as evident from the experience of leading teacher education institutions across different continents and cultures, developing a multi-disciplinary learning environment and a strong research capacity were two key components for enhancing teacher education. Students trained in such a setting would have a richer learning experience. Graduates would often be found to be more adaptive to the challenges of changing classroom demands and better equipped to tackle real life problems as a teacher. Specifically, the Report contained four recommendations:

- (a) that a University of Education, particularly one of a mono-technic character, should not be established in the UGC sector, and that other strategies be followed to lift the capacity of the HKIEd to best enhance teacher education and promote excellence in the Hong Kong higher education sector;
- (b) that the HKIEd should give priority to the strategic development of teacher education in Hong Kong, the development of additional disciplines complementary to Education and the development of a research and research training environment;
- (c) that the HKIEd should seek to implement the proposals set out in the Report by one of two options –
 - (i) by developing 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

(ii) by forming a partnership 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 congruent with the mutually agreed development plans of HKIEd and the partner university; and

(d) that the Government should approach the institutional development of the HKIEd as a matter requiring additional funding, over and above existing levels of funding provided to the UGC and should continue to take a flexible approach in planning the manpower dimension of teacher education.

2.1.5 HKIEd welcomed the recommendations laid down in the Report, choosing the proposal to develop the Institute into a multi-disciplinary institution as its preferred option. To support the Institute, the Government and the UGC, with the approval of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, provided extra resources to HKIEd for –

(a) 120 First Year First Degree³ (FYFD) places to launch four new non-education bachelor degree programmes, i.e. **Bachelor of Social Sciences (Global and Environmental Studies)** in 2010/11 (with 40 intake places, and then 30 intake places from 2012/13 onwards), **Bachelor of Arts in Language Studies** in 2010/11 (with 40 intake places), **Bachelor of Arts in Creative Arts and Culture** in 2011/12 (with 40 intake places, and then 30 intake places from 2012/13 onwards) and **Bachelor of Social Sciences in Psychology** in 2012/13 (for the four-year cohort only with 20 intake places). To help HKIEd better prepare for the provision of the courses, the UGC separately granted a one-off \$10 million to HKIEd as start-up funding for the new disciplines. The first cohort of students graduated in 2013⁴.

³ First-year-first-degree (FYFD) places refer to undergraduate intake places. In Hong Kong, the number of UGC-funded places at various levels of study is determined by the Government. For the 2014/15 academic year, the number of FYFD places as approved by the Government is 15 000, of which 770 places are assigned to teacher education.

⁴ See statistics for 2014 graduates at http://www.ied.edu.hk/web/view.php?page=facts_employment_figures

- (b) 30 research postgraduate places (RPgs) to build up HKIEd's research capacity from 2009/10 onwards.

Development since the 2009 Development Blueprint Exercise

2.1.6 In line with the 'Education-plus' vision adopted in 2009, the Institute has worked consistently towards becoming an Education-focused, multidisciplinary and research-strong institution. Building on its traditional strength in teacher education, HKIEd has expanded its academic scope into the Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as Creative Arts and Culture. It has also diversified its range of programme offerings at the bachelor, postgraduate diploma, professional and research postgraduate levels to meet the needs of in-service teachers and the community.

2.1.7 HKIEd submitted a report⁵ to the EDB in January 2012 summarising its progress since 2009 in pursuit of university title, including the development and subsequent operation in practice of the non-Education disciplines introduced since 2010/11 and the achievements made in building up the research capacity of the Institute. EDB subsequently issued a press statement affirming that HKIEd was proceeding on the right direction in its pursuit of university title. However, EDB's statement also reiterated that some key milestones had to be achieved, including the existence of evidence that the Institute already possessed the qualities and attributes commonly expected of a university. For EDB, these qualities included a solid track record in offering programmes in complementary disciplines and an expanding capacity in research. Specifically, this meant that HKIEd's new disciplines and research programmes would need to have been in operation for a sufficiently long period to build "a good and solid track record",⁶ before the Institute might submit the complementary disciplines to the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation on Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) for programme revalidation and programme area accreditation (PAA).

2.1.8 From 2012 to 2014 HKIEd worked with HKCAAVQ to undergo the four-stage accreditation process⁷ for three non-Education

⁵ 'Final Preparation for University Title': report submitted by HKIEd to the Education Bureau, Hong Kong, January 2012

⁶ EDB Press Statement on HKIEd's application for pursuit of university title, 20 January 2012 <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201201/20/P201201200519.htm>

⁷ The HKCAAVQ uses the Four-Stage Quality Assurance Process to accredit operators and their learning programmes under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF). The four stages are Initial

areas, namely Chinese Studies, English Studies and Environmental Studies. The PAA status for these three programme areas was subsequently granted by HKCAAVQ to HKIEd in July 2014 with a validity period of five years from 2014/15 to the 2018/19 academic year.

Submission of Application for University Title

2.1.9 HKIEd submitted an application for university title to the EDB in July 2014, attaching the accreditation report from the HKCAAVQ with the PAA status approved for the three programme areas. Following previous practice, the EDB invited the UGC to carry out a special review on HKIEd to determine whether it possesses the necessary capacity and qualities to be accorded university title. The EDB letter together with HKIEd's application is at **Annex A**.

2.1.10 The EDB invited the UGC to refer to the Legislative Council Brief (**Annex B**) which highlights factors to take into account when considering whether a higher education institution should be granted university title. The Brief highlights the following attributes: quality and standard of academic programmes; level and mix of programmes offered; quality of students and standing of academic staff; research capability; internal governance; quality assurance structures and the extent of self-accrediting powers; resources available to the institution; and public interest. The UGC agreed at its meeting on 12 September 2014 to form a Review Group to conduct a special review of HKIEd's application. The terms of reference and membership of the Review Group are at **Annexes C(1) – C(2)**.

2.2 TEACHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE IN HONG KONG AND BEYOND

2.2.1 As explained above (Section 2.1.3), the primary focus for the 2009 Review Group was HKIEd's 'Development Blueprint'. The Review Group took a widespread look at how the education and training of teachers had developed in different jurisdictions around the world. It found that there had been significant developments since the 1970s in many jurisdictions to enhance teacher education, such enhancements

Evaluation (IE), Programme Validation (PV), Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) and Periodic Review (PR). Operators that wish to have their learning programmes validated are required to present evidence that they meet the required standards as specified in the Four-Stage Quality Assurance Process. More information about HKCAAVQ's Four-stage Quality Assurance Process can be found at: <http://www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/en/services/accreditation/four-stage-qa-process>

being an explicit recognition of the fundamental importance of good teachers to improving standards of achievement among school children. The Legislative Council Brief, which adopted many of the recommendations of the 2009 Review Group Report, referred specifically⁸ to the importance of such enhancements for school education in Hong Kong.

2.2.2 The observations on changes in the global landscape in teacher education highlighted in the 2009 Report still hold true in 2015. Similar to its Report in 2007, McKinsey's 2010 follow-up research on the transformation of school system performance⁹ continued to emphasise that any successful system of school education would rely heavily on good teachers. Similar findings may be found in the education policy documents of Singapore¹⁰ and China¹¹. The League Table of global school rankings published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in May 2015, which placed Hong Kong in second place globally, provided further evidence of the value placed on education by the community in Hong Kong¹².

2.2.3 One corollary of the search for continuous improvements in standards in schools is a similar search for improvement in teacher education. In a global academic environment, that search reflects the development of Education as an academic field in its own right, demonstrating well-founded scholarship and research. 'Teacher training' has developed into 'Teacher Education'. In view of HKIED's role in producing a majority of the new teachers employed each year in Hong Kong, it is of great importance to Hong Kong that the teacher education offered by HKIED is of the highest quality at all levels.

Impact of developments in and demand from Mainland China

2.2.4 Following the publication of its Higher Education Review Report in 2010¹³, which stated that internationalisation should become

⁸ 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

⁹ M.Mourshed, C.Chijioko, M.Barber: "How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better" McKinsey and Company Education, November 2010, page 40-42

¹⁰ A Teacher Education Model for the 21st century (TE21), a Report by the National Institute of Education, Singapore http://www.nie.edu.sg/files/TE21_Executive%20Summary_14052010%20-%20updated.pdf

¹¹ The "Programme of Exemplary Teacher Training" – <http://www.inruled.org/iERD/Publication/Development%20of%20Teacher%20%20Training%20in%20China.pdf>

¹² <http://internationalednews.com/2015/05/26/the-biggest-ever-league-table/>

¹³ 'Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong - Report of the University Grants

one of the central themes of all UGC-funded institutions, the UGC has explicitly stated that, it “sees internationalisation and engagement with Mainland China as the key to Hong Kong’s future”¹⁴. It has been providing additional funding, through initiatives such as its ‘Matching Grant Scheme for International Activities’ and one-off incentive payments, designed to provide more overseas exchange opportunities for local students. More broadly, the intention is that such moves to increase the outbound experience (through Hong Kong students being encouraged to spend part of their course studying outside Hong Kong) and the inbound experience (through students from abroad being encouraged to come to Hong Kong)¹⁵ should form part of the aspiration for Hong Kong to become *the* regional education hub for the Pan-Asia Region. It has been stressed that, “what has been achieved since the early twenty-first century in Hong Kong is not about ‘mainlandization’ or regionalization but genuinely internationalization”.¹⁶ While understanding that Hong Kong's relationship with Mainland China will remain of great importance, higher education institutions, including HKIEd, need to develop global strategies, which encompass that fact but do not constrain them from looking beyond both Hong Kong and Mainland China.

2.2.5 While HKIEd has responded well to the UGC’s initiatives and has provided evidence of the extent to which it has encouraged its students to pursue part of their studies abroad, wider social developments stemming from the relationship between Hong Kong and Mainland China may impact on the Institute in relation to the demand for its graduates. Two demographic trends are working in opposite directions: the growing migration of non-locals (especially Mainland students) to Hong Kong to pursue higher education and the declining local population in Hong Kong (including school age children). These opposing trends create challenges for teacher education institutions because the combined effect is not yet clear from a manpower planning point of view. It is possible that in future more children from Mainland China will be enrolled in Hong Kong schools. It was reported in 2014 that more than 17 000 children crossed the border from Mainland China to Hong Kong every day to attend school¹⁷. That number has increased substantially since 2001 and has put

Committee 2010’ (<http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/ugc/publication/report/her2010/her2010-rpt.pdf>)

¹⁴ ‘Internationalisation and Engagement with Mainland China’, from the UGC 2011 Annual Report (<http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/report/figure2011/a001.htm>)

¹⁵ Moves are also underway to encourage school pupils to “exchange” with paired schools in Mainland China - see Para 157 of the 2015 Policy Address (<http://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2015/eng/pdf/PA2015.pdf>)

¹⁶ “Hong Kong higher education in the 21st century”, Dr M.H.Lee, Hong Kong Teachers Centre Journal, Vol.13, page 15 - 34

¹⁷ “Hong Kong can’t ignore social impact of mainland integration”: Belinda Hui King-fai, (The Hong Kong Council of Social Service) in the South China Morning Post, 4th September 2012

pressures on Hong Kong, not least in the capacity of schools in Hong Kong to deal with the demand. While parents in Mainland China might choose to send their children to school in Hong Kong because of the quality of the education provided, language barriers may present serious difficulties for the children (Cantonese-speaking parents but children being taught in English, for instance, or Putonghua-speaking parents with children being taught in Cantonese and English). In its role as the principal source of graduate teachers in Hong Kong, HKIED has already responded to some of these pressures and is in a good position to collaborate with other agencies to do more¹⁸.

2.2.6 Demand for higher education in Mainland China continues to grow, with overseas higher education institutions going some way to accommodate ever-increasing student numbers. There is a strongly held view among some Chinese parents that studying at an overseas university will place their children at an advantage in terms of future prospects for employment and social mobility. In this context, Hong Kong provides the benefits of ‘studying abroad’ in a place deeply infused with western culture in terms of language environment and social, legal and educational structures, as well as geographical and cultural proximity to China. Hong Kong universities experience strong demand from Mainland China applicants¹⁹ but they are limited in the number of students whom they may admit, by the resources at their disposal, by the need to mix local and non-local students judiciously and by UGC policy. Although there has been a significant decline in the overall number of applications from Mainland China students for entry to the 2015/16 year, the demand for places is still much greater than the supply.

2.2.7 HKIED enrolled 276 non-local students to UGC-funded programmes in 2013/14, compared with 7,589 local students. Of those 276 students, 259 came from Mainland China²⁰. HKIED has adopted as a

(<http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1028844/hong-kong-cant-ignore-social-impact-mainland-integration>)

¹⁸ For example, the Student Affairs Office organized support services and integration activities for Mainland, Taiwan and other non-local students, including a Buddy Programme (<http://www.ied.edu.hk/lt/view.php?secid=5486>). An ‘Internationalisation and Campus Integration Award Competition’ is set up to recognise student organisations or groups, organising meaningful projects that promote internationalisation and campus integration. It is also noted that projects are underway to examine the support provided to new non-local students’ academic and social-cultural integration into the HKIED communities in an evidence-based approach (https://oraas0.ied.edu.hk/ric/web/project_details.jsp?pid=2515880&r=&k=social+integration).

¹⁹ Professor Tony F Chan, President of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, reported in 2014 that HKUST received 6,770 applications in 2013 from Mainland China and admitted 180 students from that number (in “The impact of global trends on Hong Kong higher education”, Professor T.F.Chan, Q.S. Showcase, 14th February 2014)

²⁰ University Grants Committee of Hong Kong statistics (<http://cdcf.ugc.edu.hk/cdcf/searchUniv.do?actionType=searchUniversity&mode=&lang=EN&universi>

‘key milestone’ for 2016 that the number of full-time non-local students should be kept at a level of 15%²¹ of the total number of students in the Institute.

2.2.8 Overall, HKIEd is in a competitive position in what is admittedly a rather limited market in which teacher education is not among the most popular choices of students. HKIEd's fees for non-local students (HK\$110,000 for one year of a BEd course) compare favourably with a similar course in Australia (the equivalent of HK\$220,000 for one year of a BEd course at Monash University, for instance). As an institution, HKIEd has decided to provide at least 80% of its instruction in English, while continuing to recognise that bilingual and trilingual competencies in teachers (English, Cantonese, Putonghua) equip them with the essential skills for effective instruction in schools. The Hong Kong Government relaxed its restrictions on non-local students taking up internships and part-time employment in 2014. The Government also has in place the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals, which allows graduates of recognised Hong Kong higher education institutions to apply for the right to be employed in Hong Kong after graduation.

2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF A UNIVERSITY

2.3.1 As the terms of reference of the present Review Group include providing advice to the UGC on, "whether HKIEd ... possesses the qualities and attributes commonly expected of a university and should be granted university title at this juncture", the Review Group considered that it would be useful to examine "the qualities and attributes commonly expected of a university". It accordingly undertook desk-based research on common practice in a number of jurisdictions from around the world.

2.3.2 Starting from the findings of the 2009 Review Group²², it was decided to revisit practices in those jurisdictions looked at in 2009 (the various jurisdictions within the United Kingdom; Australia; the United States; China; and Japan). In addition, the OECD 'Programme for International School Assessment' (PISA) 2012 ratings provided examples of jurisdictions where the high quality of mathematics teaching in schools

[ties=HKIEd&fields=Enrol_Origin_2013\)](#)

²¹ http://www.ied.edu.hk/sp2013-16/1_ENG_Key_milestones.html

²² Research Findings: Attributes of a University - Annex F of the Report of the Review Group on Hong Kong Institute of Education's development Blueprint dated 17.2.2009 at http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/ugc/publication/report/hkied_review_report/annex_f_e.pdf

offered one proxy for quality of education in general. Thus, practices in Estonia²³, Finland²⁴, Netherlands²⁵, New Zealand²⁶, Poland²⁷, Singapore²⁸, South Korea²⁹ and Taiwan³⁰ were examined, as well as those in Hong Kong.

2.3.3 Common themes emerging from the research echoed the findings of the 2009 Review Group. A university is expected to display most if not all of the following characteristics (the order does not imply precedence):

- Sound quality assurance of programmes, procedures and systems;
- Periodic scrutiny by external academic peers;
- Robust governance, both in terms of structures and their operation;
- Academic autonomy;
- Student involvement in governance;
- Academic breadth;
- Peer-acknowledged research and scholarship; and
- Powers of self-certification or to award degrees.

²³ Universities Act (12 January 1995) - <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/521032014002/consolide>

²⁴ Universities Act 2009 (558/2009) - <http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2009/en20090558.pdf>

²⁵ See, for example, Recognition of institutions in the Netherlands - NVAO (Dutch quality assurance body) - http://nvaio.com/recognition_of_institutions_in_the_netherlands

²⁶ Education Act 1989 - <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/DLM175959.html>

²⁷ Law on Higher Education, 2005, Article 3 -

https://www.nauka.gov.pl/g2/oryginal/2013_12/d687905792f5ff6a3ecf84d7df4f8e57.pdf

²⁸ Please refer to requirements in, e.g. Singapore Enhanced Registration Network for Higher Education - <https://www.cpe.gov.sg/cpe/slot/u100/Publication/publication/ERF%20HANDBOOK%20PDF.pdf>

²⁹ Higher Education Act, Section 2.1 -

http://www.moleg.go.kr/english/korLawEng.jsessionid=N8rtIMXT6nkiiKgZ3DnKMKIeeWiaiiwx7RUXnMmfzHs3mnZTef15GdovVtliQ1AI.moleg_a2_servlet_engine2?pstSeq=52250&pageIndex=57

³⁰ Enshrined in the University Act (amended 3 January 2007) and the subject of further development (see <http://english.moe.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=15708&ctNode=11410&mp=1>)