

# CHAPTER 1

## PUTTING THE REVIEW IN CONTEXT

### REVIEW GROUP ON HKIEd's DEVELOPMENT BLUEPRINT

1.1 The University Grants Committee (UGC) set up the Review Group in August 2007 in response to the Government's request, at **Annex A(1)**, for expert advice on the Development Blueprint put forward by the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd). The terms of reference and membership of the Review Group, and the terms of reference of the UGC, are at **Annexes A(2) – A(4)** respectively. The Terms of Reference request the UGC to consider the proposals set out in the Blueprint as well as the interests and needs of the Hong Kong community, including the promotion of excellence in the higher education sector. This Report presents the findings of the Review Group and its conclusions, as endorsed by the UGC.

1.2 The Review Group reached its conclusions after taking into consideration a wide range of facts and issues. In considering the Blueprint, the Review Group has been conscious of the broader strategic context in which this Review is set.

1.3 HKIEd is the major supplier of teachers to Hong Kong schools. The Review has proceeded on the basis that improving Teacher Education in Hong Kong transcends the issue of status or title of HKIEd, and that the overall development of the higher education sector – the UGC sector in particular – and of Teacher Education in Hong Kong are the core issues to be addressed.

### BOUNDARIES OF THE REPORT

1.4 This is a report on the possible development pathway of an existing higher education institution, set in the context of its specific role and the UGC's strategic vision for the Hong Kong higher education sector as a whole. It is not intended as a comprehensive review of Teacher Education or the development needs of the teaching profession. The Review Group did not evaluate the Teacher Education programmes at other local universities. (The profiles of other Teacher Education faculties/departments at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), the

Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) are at **Annex C.**) This Report takes into consideration the particular position and circumstances of HKIEd, and is not intended as a guide or template for the development of other higher education institutions in Hong Kong. Finally, this Report is neither a quality audit nor an institutional review of HKIEd, which is subject to regular and periodic audits by the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) [E1] – like all other UGC-funded institutions.

1.5 In preparing this Report we have taken note of some of Government’s broad policy directions in relation to Teacher Education. In essence, we have been advised that current education policies and modes of teacher training are expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Notably, a balance will continue to exist between Bachelor of Education (BEd) and Postgraduate Diploma in Education provisions, with the BEd programmes remaining as the prime source of supply for teachers in pre-primary and primary schools and for some subjects in secondary level.

1.6 The Review Group has identified relevant emerging issues internationally in Teacher Education which provide some guidance in evaluating the Blueprint. The development of former monotechnic Teacher Education institutions in a diverse number of jurisdictions, and the arguments that have supported those initiatives, also have been considered.

1.7 A guiding principle of the Review has been to evaluate the development goals of HKIEd in the context of the long term interests and needs of the Hong Kong community. These are addressed in detail in a number of key policy documents and provide the rationale behind Hong Kong’s current education reform. For instance, *Learning for Life, Learning through life* sets out that

*“Students should be the main protagonists in learning. The ultimate objective of education is to enable every student to achieve all-round development according to his/her own attributes.”* [45, para. 6.3]

and therefore it is incumbent on Teacher Education providers to:

*“continuously update the content of their programmes and enhance their relevance so that principals and teachers can acquire the knowledge and skills to implement the education reform.”* [45, para. 11.10]

1.8 Where relevant, the Review has also sought to advance the interests of higher education students and be attentive to approaches to Teacher Education that serve to:

- attract and retain good quality students for the teaching profession;
- provide a rich learning environment at undergraduate and postgraduate levels; and
- provide flexible career pathways for students throughout their course of study.

## **MAJOR TASKS CARRIED OUT**

1.9 The Review Group carried out the following major tasks:

- Consideration of the Blueprint [E2] and other documents submitted by HKIEd, including supplements and replies to questions formulated by the Review Group;
- Review of documents related to Hong Kong's ongoing education reforms and their implications for Teacher Education;
- Review of international trends in Teacher Education policy and institutions;
- Review of literature on emerging major issues in Teacher Education;
- Review of criteria required for university status in different jurisdictions;
- Review of literature on monotechnic universities and institutions;
- Dialogue with the senior management team of HKIEd;
- Visits to the Tai Po campus of HKIEd;
- Meetings with the Student Union, the Academic Staff Association and the Alumni Association of HKIEd;
- Meeting with the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications [E3];

- Solicited views from stakeholder groups including primary and secondary school principals' associations, early childhood education bodies, teacher and other education bodies, as well as chambers of commerce and employers' associations. A list of the stakeholders contacted, met and submissions received is at **Annex G(1)**.

## **APPROACH OF THE REPORT**

1.10 This Report is organised as follows:

- Chapter 2 describes the role of HKIEd in Teacher Education in Hong Kong. It also gives attention to the development of monotechnic Teacher Education institutions in the international arena and examines the emerging issues in the discipline of Teacher Education that are relevant to this Review.
- Chapter 3 evaluates the Blueprint's proposals, including the key proposal for transformation of HKIEd. This chapter also considers the other proposals to develop the Institute in the areas of UGC-funded sub-degree and undergraduate places (including double degrees), research, research training, regional and international activities, and self-financing activities.
- Chapter 4 recommends a development of HKIEd to transform it to a new level of fitness for purpose and provides two options for pursuing that transformation.
- Chapter 5 draws conclusions and recommends a process for the further development of HKIEd, which also serves to promote excellence in the higher education sector in Hong Kong.