

PART ONE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Since 2009, the City University of Hong Kong (CityU) has submitted and re-submitted its proposal to the Government/University Grants Committee (UGC) to establish a publicly-funded veterinary school in Hong Kong. After CityU's third submission in 2016, and taking into account UGC's previous comments on CityU's past proposals, in August 2016 the Government concluded that there is a *prima facie* case to consider introducing a professionally-accredited undergraduate training programme in veterinary medicine in Hong Kong. The ideal veterinary school, to suit the needs of Hong Kong, should have a small professional veterinary medicine training and a top-heavy postgraduate and research programme.

1.2 In October 2017, CityU submitted a formal proposal to UGC for a publicly-funded six-year Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (BVM) programme with an annual intake of 30 students from the 2019/20 academic year. The proposal was prepared by CityU following an outline of key issues and a set of conditions for seeking public-funding of an undergraduate veterinary programme, which was drawn up by UGC to assist CityU. These key issues and conditions include, among others, accreditation, welfare of the students and graduates (exit plan), financial sustainability, and research plans with consideration of public health issues in Hong Kong (such as Avian influenza). UGC then proceeded to form a "Task Force on the BVM programme of CityU" (BVMTF) to examine if CityU has fully addressed those key issues and met the conditions for operating a publicly-funded veterinary programme.

1.3 Since formation in October 2017, BVMTF has met twice and made a series of local visits, and, in the process, through the UGC Secretariat, sought views and feedback from a wide array of stakeholders.

1.4 Among the various issues covered during the past few months, the BVMTF considered accreditation, financial sustainability and welfare of the students and graduates of the BVM to be most important, and is satisfied that CityU has provided sufficient evidence and made good efforts in responding to BVMTF's observations and other concerns of the UGC. Based on the BVMTF's observations, additional input from CityU and other stakeholders, and their evaluation by the stakeholders, BVMTF is pleased to report that CityU's BVM proposal and additional information have addressed the concerns

of the UGC and met the conditions for introducing and operating a publicly-funded veterinary programme.

1.5 BVMTF recommends UGC's support of CityU's proposal for a six-year BVM programme with an intake of 30 students each year starting from the 2019/20 academic year, and the University may redeploy UGC funding of up to HK\$32 million per year by the time it reaches the "steady-state" in year 2024/25. CityU may initiate further dialogue with Government/UGC on the financial arrangements before the start of the 2022-25 triennium.

1.6 BVMTF is pleased to note CityU's enthusiasm in driving the BVM programme. It anticipates that CityU will take up a significant leadership role in the veterinary profession in Hong Kong, and continue to build excellence in veterinary medicine and research.

1.7 UGC has a responsibility to ensure that BVM graduates have a clear pathway to practising veterinary medicine in Hong Kong. Hence, the BVMTF is prepared to continue to monitor the progress of CityU's BVM programme periodically and tender advice to CityU through the UGC on major issues arising from the implementation of CityU's BVM programme, until the CityU's College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences has achieved full accreditation status.