

List of Recommendations by the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education

- I. The policy of supporting the parallel development of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors is conducive to encouraging the growth and diversity of higher education in Hong Kong. There should be a clearer differentiation between the two sectors. At the sectoral level, the self-financing post-secondary sector needs to be “reformed” and “modernised” to operate vibrantly alongside the publicly-funded sector.
- II. The Government has a role to foster strategic co-ordination amongst self-financing institutions and help them identify and develop their distinct character and niche areas, through more targeted human resource forecasts and broad guidance on strategic areas of needs. Self-financing post-secondary institutions should demonstrate how their development will respond to community needs, and how they will achieve long-term sustainability in terms of academic quality, student intake and financial viability by way of formulation and implementation of strategic plans.
- III. The role and functions of the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education should be strengthened with a view to providing strategic and policy advice on the development of the self-financing sector, including advice on measures to promote, facilitate and coordinate such development in terms of scope of operation, quality and governance.
- IV. The overall support for the self-financing post-secondary sector should be reviewed to assist self-financing institutions under the reformed regulatory regime to sustain and grow. In particular, the Government may consider providing more financial support of a non-recurrent nature to facilitate improvement measures in areas such as programme and staff development or facilities upgrading with a view to enhancing teaching and learning.
- V. The prevailing binary system of sub-degree education comprising Associate Degree and Higher Diploma qualifications should be

maintained at large based on better differentiation of the roles of the two qualifications.

- VI. Apart from extending the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors to students enrolling in selected self-financing sub-degree programmes that are conducive to vocational and professional education and training in support of specific industries/sectors with pressing human resource needs, the Government should also provide financial support to self-financing institutions for developing selective sub-degree programmes with high market relevance and high upfront investment in hardware, so as to help them take off.
- VII. Taking into consideration the development hitherto and the reception of the sub-degrees by students and by the community, the positioning of the Associate Degree and Higher Diploma qualifications should be more sharply differentiated. Associate Degree qualification should be positioned as primarily preparing students for articulation to general degree programmes; and Higher Diploma qualification should be positioned as preparing students for either immediate employment at para-professional level in relevant industries and professions, or articulation to specialised professional degree programmes.
- VIII. To further enhance the quality of sub-degree education, the Government should conduct a more focused study to review and improve the structure and curriculum of Associate Degree and Higher Diploma education to reflect their respective refined positioning within the higher education sector in Hong Kong. Higher Diploma education should be reinvigorated with stepped-up Government support measures as Higher Diploma education is able to generate appropriately trained human resources needed by many industries.
- IX. The Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) should be comprehensively reviewed and updated, making reference to comparable provisions in the statutes governing publicly-funded universities and in tandem with the academic and institutional governance expected of a modern higher education institution.

- X. The regulatory regime for the self-financing sector should be reformed to enable self-financing institutions to evolve into mature and established private post-secondary education institutions by rationalising the arrangements in respect of academic structure, strategic planning, programme development, quality assurance and governance, etc. The applicable accreditation processes and criteria should be reviewed to better complement efforts aimed at quality assurance and competency.

- XI. A clear policy underpinned by a fair and transparent mechanism (through either legislative or administrative arrangements) should be formulated such that operators whose development and institutional capabilities fall short of their original plan and prescribed standards after a reasonably long trial period – such as serious shortfalls in teaching and learning, teaching capacity, and programme delivery - may be de-registered, with a view to ensuring that institutions can fully demonstrate their competency in continuing to offer an appropriate level of self-financing post-secondary programmes.

- XII. Institutions providing self-financing programmes at sub-degree and undergraduate (including top-up degree) levels, including the self-financing arms of publicly-funded institutions, as well as institutions under the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279), should come under a unified regulatory regime for the entire self-financing post-secondary education sector to promote coherence in quality assurance, governance, positioning and overall coordination of the sector which will be conducive to the healthy and sustainable development of the private higher education sector as a whole. The Government should encourage the development of self-financing institutions by providing targeted support to those operating under the remit of the reformed regulatory regime.

- XIII. In view of the historical background of the provision of post-secondary self-financing programmes by publicly-funded institutions, the Government should adopt a pragmatic approach for migration of the relevant self-financing arms of these institutions to the new unified regime under the Post Secondary Colleges

Ordinance (Cap. 320) by supporting and facilitating the process, having regard to any possible impact on students and teachers, and flexibly addressing their concerns over linkage with the parent institution and academic accreditation.