

Cosmopolitan Education

Overview

Education is a top priority for Hong Kong. The goal is to equip our students to embrace the opportunities and face the challenges of tomorrow.

In 2012, the Global Index of Cognitive Skills and Educational Attainment, conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit, ranked Hong Kong third, bracketing it among the top three “education superpowers” in the world.

No student in Hong Kong is deprived of education due to lack of means.

Government recurrent expenditure on education for 2013-14 is estimated at US\$8.1 billion – 21.6 per cent of recurrent government expenditure.

Key Advantages

Three fundamental strengths set Hong Kong apart as a centre for education in the region: cultural diversity, opportunities and international standards.

Hong Kong’s rich cultural blend of East and West forms the backbone of a vibrant learning environment. Students can communicate in both English and Chinese in an intellectually stimulating mix of cultures.

As the premier gateway to China, Hong Kong is in tune with our nation’s needs in terms of talent, investment, creativity and innovation. There is also great opportunity for students to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and learn about different cultures, particularly how to successfully do business in the Mainland.

Hong Kong’s third fundamental strength is its high standards of education. Compared to size, we have more world-class universities than any other place in the world.

Global Education

Hong Kong’s universities, which enjoy excellent global rankings, are home to scholars from every corner of the world. They have enriched academic diversity at our institutions and strengthened our higher education system.

The quota for non-local students was doubled to 20 per cent to further internationalise Hong Kong’s higher education environment.

Immigration procedures and employment restrictions for foreign students have been relaxed. After graduation, non-local students can remain in Hong Kong without restriction for up to one year to enable them to search for the right job. They can also take up part-time on-campus work, internships and summer jobs while studying.

Over the past five years, the number of non-local students taking publicly-funded programmes has increased by about 60 per cent to over 13 700. Including self-financing programmes, there were about 26 600 non-local students from more than 70 countries/regions pursuing post-secondary studies in Hong Kong in the 2012/13 academic year.

Attractions for Overseas and Mainland Students

- Learn in a cosmopolitan, liberal environment
- Attain internationally recognised qualifications
- Gain global perspectives and employment opportunities
- Geographical and cultural proximity eases adjustment and learning conditions for Mainland students
- Learn on the doorstep of the world’s fastest-growing destination for overseas students
- Vibrant multi-cultural scene can expand horizons
- Academic freedom

Scholarships

A US\$292.6 million HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund grants scholarships to quality local and non-local students in the publicly-funded higher education sector.

In the 2012-13 academic year, total scholarship allocation to publicly-funded degree or above level and sub-degree students will be around US\$5.4 million and US\$1.2 million respectively. In addition, up to 10 targeted scholarships will be offered to first-year non-local full-time students from ASEAN countries, India and Korea, enrolled in publicly-funded degree programmes in Hong Kong. The targeted scholarships will cover students’ full tuition fees.

A US\$452.6 million Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund provides scholarships to outstanding students and support quality enhancement efforts of institutions.

Initiatives

The following initiatives seek to further enhance the sector:

- Allocating greenfield sites and vacant school premises for the development of new international schools or the expansion of existing ones.
- Working with the Shenzhen Government to develop the Lok Ma Chau Loop area into a higher education cluster, backed by high-tech R&D as well as cultural and creative industries.
- Working with local higher education institutions to further internationalise the higher education sector, including stepping up exchange and promotion efforts in Asia.
- Promoting cooperation between Industry Training Advisory Committees and education and training providers to make available more relevant training opportunities to young people and in-service personnel.

International Schools

Hong Kong has a vibrant international school sector, which helps attract talent and executives from around the world to come here with their families.

We have 48 international schools – more than any other Asian city – offering about 38 700 primary and secondary school places. These schools offer a familiar learning environment for students from all corners of the globe, and over 10 curricula, including American, Australian, British, Canadian, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Singaporean and the International Baccalaureate.

Harrow International School Hong Kong, a branch of the prestigious British school, was established in 2012, to ultimately offer boarding and day places for 1 500 students.

World-class Universities

Hong Kong is recognised as one of the best in the world in university performance relative to GDP. That means compared to size, we have more world-class universities than any other place in the world.

Hong Kong has 17 degree-awarding higher education institutions, including nine universities. Three universities were ranked in the world's top 50 by the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2012-13. The University of Hong Kong was ranked 23rd, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) 33rd and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) 40th.

In 2012, a Times Higher Education survey placed HKUST (3rd), CUHK(12th) and City University of Hong Kong (18th) in the “100 under 50” rankings in the 100 listed universities less than 50 years old. The QS Asian University Rankings 2012 ranks HKUST first for the third year in a row, HKU second and CUHK seventh. HKU and HKUST also rank among the top 100 in the Times Higher

Education World University Rankings 2012-13.

Our universities have revamped their undergraduate programmes and extended normative length from three to four years starting 2012-13. This enables more time and space to provide a broader, deeper, more globally oriented university experience in line with other national academic systems.

Hong Kong's universities host Asia's (and the world's) best executive business management programmes. A Financial Times survey in 2012 ranked the Kellogg-HKUST EMBA programme first worldwide. *The Economist* ranked the Hong Kong University MBA Asia's best. The HKUST MBA was ranked 8th by the *Financial Times* in 2013.

There are also about 1 100 non-local courses in Hong Kong, providing degree or above level education to about 45 000 students.

Hong Kong's universities excel in various fields of research and teaching, especially in medicine, chemistry, biotechnology, business administration and textiles.

Enhancements

In 2012, Hong Kong's strategic education reforms saw the first cohort of students completing the 3-year New Senior Secondary curriculum under the New Academic Structure. All students can now receive 12 years of free school education and sit for the new public examination, the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, at the end of Secondary 6 and proceed to multiple pathways to further education.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service of the UK has confirmed that the tariff points awarded for the highest level of this new examination are higher than those awarded for the highest grade in the General Certificate of Education A Level or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

The Qualifications Framework (QF) will continue to be promoted. Apart from the drawing up of Specification of Competency Standards and the recently introduced Award Titles Scheme and the use of QF credit, the development of a credit accumulation and transfer system will be further explored, and collaboration with the QFs of other areas will be fostered.

In two years, over one-third of our young people in the relevant age group will have the opportunity to pursue degree-level education. If sub-degree places are included, nearly 70 per cent of young people will have access to post-secondary education.

Diversification

A two-pronged strategy is promoting the parallel development of the publicly-funded sector and the self-financing sector.

A basket of support measures to the self-financing post-secondary education sector include land at nominal premium or premises at nominal rent, interest-free start-up loans, student finances and quality assurance subsidies.

For more information, please visit www.edb.gov.hk