

For information

Bills Committee on the Race Discrimination Bill

Admission of Local Non-Chinese Speaking Students to Institutions Funded by University Grants Committee and Further Flexibility on Application of Chinese Language Requirement

Purpose

At the meeting held on 23 March 2007, the Administration was requested to provide information on the number of local non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students currently studying in local universities. Noting that the information is not readily available (as institutions funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) have not been keeping statistics on the ethnicity and the NCS status of students), at the meeting held on 8 October 2007, Members requested the Administration to provide the number of students who have been exempted by UGC-funded institutions from meeting the Chinese Language requirement for admission under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) and non-JUPAS route respectively, so as to deduce the number of local NCS students currently studying in those institutions.

2. Separately, the Administration was requested at the meeting held on 8 October 2007 to provide the result of the Administration's latest discussion with the UGC-funded institutions on the acceptance of alternative qualifications in Chinese e.g. the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) (Chinese) examination for admission to the institutions.

3. This paper provides the information as requested by Members.

NCS students admitted to UGC-funded institutions

4. On the number of local NCS students entering local universities, beginning from the 2006/07 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB) has started to collect information on the ethnicity and spoken language at home in respect of our Primary 1 to Secondary 7 students through the annual Student Enrolment Survey. The purpose is to identify the group of NCS students who are studying in public sector schools and schools receiving government subvention under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), and following the local curriculum. With the information available, the EDB has sought the assistance of the UGC-funded institutions to trace the articulation of these NCS students to further studies in local universities starting from the 2007/08 academic year. Members are invited to note that out of 23 NCS students who were studying Secondary 7 in public sector and DSS schools following the local curriculum in the 2006/07 school year, seven have met the minimum entrance requirements for admission to UGC-funded institutions under JUPAS in 2007/08 and five have eventually been admitted. Among the 16 NCS students not meeting the minimum requirements, only four have failed just on the ground of their failing to comply with the Chinese Language requirement or equivalent.

5. We will continue to collect relevant information for each academic year, with a view to building up some useful statistics over time. We believe the information is a more representative indicator focusing on NCS students than information on cases of exemption granted by UGC-funded institutions on Chinese Language requirement (the latter information covers both NCS and Chinese-speaking students and institutions may not have data differentiating the two).

Further flexibility on application of the Chinese Language requirement

6. On the Administration's latest discussion with the eight UGC-funded institutions on acceptance of alternative qualifications in Chinese for admission to universities, the Administration and representatives of the UGC-funded institutions have come to the consensus that in addition to the existing flexibilities, institutions may favourably consider further flexibility in the form of accepting alternative qualification(s) in Chinese Language e.g. the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), General Certificate in Education (GCE) and International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) , for students pursuing the local curriculum and seeking admission to the institutions under JUPAS, upon verification of the following specified circumstances as being applicable to the students concerned –

- (a) the student has learned Chinese for less than six years while receiving primary and secondary education; or
- (b) the student has learned Chinese Language for six years or more in schools, but have been taught an adapted and simpler curriculum not normally applicable to the majority of students in our local schools.

7. The UGC-institutions are now consulting further within the institutions on implementation details, particularly on the minimum requisite gradings under the alternative Chinese Language qualifications to be accepted. Both the Administration and the institutions are working towards the target of having further details announced by early 2008.

Presentation

8. This paper has been prepared for Members' information in response to items IV (14) and (18) on the "List of issues raised by

members of the Bills Committee”, LC Paper No CB(2)2753/06-07(05)
issued on 2 October 2007.

Education Bureau
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