



Introduction to FSTE

The **Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education** (FSTE or Federation), formerly known as The Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions, was established in 1994 with six founding members. Currently, FSTE membership comprises thirteen institutions as Full Members and several heads of institutions or past Chairmen of FSTE as Individual Members.

The Federation promotes the improvement of the quality and professional standards of self-financing programmes through adherence to ethical codes, promotion of good practices, and professional exchanges. It further supports collaboration among institutions and with other sectors, and participates in the development and implementation of government initiatives for the sector. Today, FSTE is generally regarded as the main



body representing the self-financing tertiary education sector in Hong Kong covering self-financing degree, sub-degree, continuing education and programmes leading to non-local awards,



自資高等教育聯盟
Federation for Self-financing
Tertiary Education



Full Members



Caritas - Hong Kong



City University of Hong Kong



Hong Kong Baptist University



Hong Kong College of Technology



Hong Kong Institute of Technology



Lingnan University



The Chinese University of Hong Kong



The Hong Kong Institute of Education



The Hong Kong Polytechnic University



The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology



The Open University of Hong Kong



The University of Hong Kong



Vocational Training Council

Overview of Self-financing Tertiary Sector



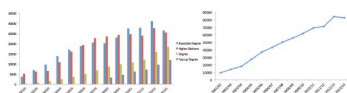
The provision of higher education in Hong Kong has consistently fallen far short of demand until quite recently. Before 2000, the great majority of such provision was heavily subsidized and the amount of self-financing tertiary education was very limited. The infrastructure, funding, regulatory framework and formal quality processes were largely absent. So when the Chief Executive Mr Tung Chee-hwa proposed in the 2000 Policy Address to strive for 60% participation rate of the relevant age cohort in tertiary education within ten years, it seemed like a very lofty goal. At the time, only the continuing education sector owned extensive experience in offering self-financing programmes at the tertiary level, mostly in part-time mode. A small percentage in the manner of formal education. The task was to provide for about 28,000 additional places for formal higher education, bringing the total number to around 55,000.



Since year 2000, higher education on a self-financing basis went through rapid changes by means of programme development, infrastructural and regulatory framework establishment, as well as quality improvement. Moreover, some of the major providers had experience in continuing education, while others were post-secondary institutions.

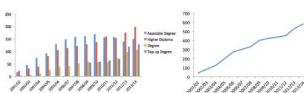
The net result of the rapid expansion of self-financing tertiary education is what the government calls "the multiple pathways available for school leavers" today. Aside from the subsidized provision of the UGC-funded institutions, there is now a full range of self-financing sub-degree and degree programmes offered by a number of providers so that plenty of opportunities can be provided to those who wish to pursue higher education. Such programmes include direct entry to four-year locally accredited degree programmes, two-year sub-degree programmes leading to Associate Degrees (more generic) and Higher Diplomas (more specialist oriented) which may further articulate to subsidized senior places; top-up programmes leading to local and non-local awards. Together with the Yi Jin Diploma, which is the school leaving certificate equivalent, most people can now pursue self-financing education beyond senior secondary through higher education, continuing education and other trade or profession specific programmes. In sum, the Federation and its members have played a major role in the development of the sector since 2000. Below are some recent statistics about the sector.

Enrolments of Full-time Accredited Self-financing Post-secondary Programmes



Source: www.ipass.gov.hk

Full-time Accredited Self-financing Post-secondary Programmes



Source: www.ipass.gov.hk

History of Continuing Education

In the beginning

Of the thirteen members of the Federation, a few of them have been engaged in adult and continuing education for a very long time. The roots of such education can be traced back to 1933 in the form of a junior technical school and trade school in the 1940s. What is now the Hong Kong College of Technology (former Mongkok Workers' Night School), has been active since late 1940s with adult basic education. The Evening School of Higher Chinese Studies was established in 1951 as a government response to the plight of school leavers from the Chinese Middle School system in Hong Kong who were no longer encouraged to enter higher education institutions in China. In December 1954, it provided three-year courses in general arts, commerce, and journalism, leading to a diploma issued by the Education Department.



As recommended in the 1952 Keswick Report on Higher Education and the 1953 Jennings/Logan Report, The University of Hong Kong opened its own Department of Extra Mural Studies in 1956. The Department of Extramural Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong was set up in 1965, two years after the establishment of the University. The establishment of Department of Extramural Studies at Baptist College followed in 1975.

Following this tradition, Vocational Training Council was established in 1982 and similar extension units were subsequently established, including those of Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 1988, City University of Hong Kong in 1991, The Open University of Hong Kong in 1992 and Lingnan University in 2001.



History of Continuing Education

Evolving Continuing Education

Since the 1960s, universities and non-government bodies have offered continuing education in the form of part-time study. In the early days, due to the shortage of higher education places, non-credit short courses were the only readily available opportunities for further studies. These courses were not elaborately structured, some courses were even offered in the form of correspondence, radio, and television. Each course could attract thousands of learners.

It was not until the early 1970s when some of the courses became more structured and evolved into certificate and diploma programmes. They were very well received. Typically, certificate programmes of 100 hours required formal school leaving qualifications while diploma programmes of over 180 hours required matriculation entry.

Thereafter, certificate and diploma programmes with the training requirements by certain trades or professions began to develop. The Certificate of Housing Management at HKU SPACE is a prominent example that the learner could eventually become a member of the Chartered Institute of Housing, a well sought after qualification in the property management sector. Accounting, law, marketing, personnel management, gemology, graphic design, construction, occupational health and safety, and information technology were other early examples. So over time, continuing education courses with assessment were recognized by local and non-local trade or professional bodies. Some even became mandated requirements to certain jobs.



Construction course offered by Hong Kong College of Technology is accredited by the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). Graduates who fulfil specified education and professional development requirements are eligible to apply for the Membership of CIOB.



HKBU SCE Gem Centre was founded in 1980, SCE offering jewellery programmes for more than 30 years. One of the programmes, FGA Diploma in Gemology, helped students to become a Fellow of the Association, an internationally recognized gemological qualification.

Transnational Programmes

Continuing education courses approved or validated by professional bodies can better prepare learners for practice. They evolved into structured programmes leading to an award of certificate or diploma that has standing with professional bodies. Some non-local institutions also recognised the courses for advanced standing or exemption. With the recognition by both professional bodies and non-local institutions, many diploma programmes evolved into feeder programmes for non-local degree programmes. The amount of advanced standing or exemption attained could be one-third, one-half or two-thirds of an undergraduate programme.

In 1997, the Non-local Higher and Professional Education Ordinance was approved which provided the legal basis for the offering of transnational programmes in Hong Kong. As more and more local diploma and sub-degree programmes have been recognized by non-local institutions for articulation purposes, transnational programme became the natural pathway for progression. Many of these programmes are still thriving today after going through local accreditation by HKCAAVQ.

Development of Continuing Education

Strengthening of Quality Assurance (QA)

To ensure programme quality, many institutions have introduced or upgraded their quality assurance system by making reference to non-local universities and the host country's QA authorities, local and non-local professional bodies, government departments, local accreditation bodies or university QA regimes.

Although institutions have worked with overseas partners since the 1970s, the rapid expansion of transnational programmes took place in the 1990s. In this respect, it is interesting to note that HKU SPACE has started to offer non-local undergraduate awards in 1964 and postgraduate awards in 1990 (both are University of London External Degrees), and overseas professional examinations in 1989. In comparison, SCOPE of City University of Hong Kong was established in 1991 as a Centre for Continuing Education. Its certificate and diploma programmes were first offered in 1992 while the first transnational programme was offered in 1991. Its first formal QA guidelines was approved by Senate in 2002 while the formal QA Framework regulating short courses, certificate and diploma and transnational programmes was approved by Senate in 2009. Progression diploma programmes, formally validated and recognized by non-local universities were introduced in 2004.



With the expansion of self-financing sub-degrees, and in response to new development of a Qualifications Framework in 2005, the Heads of Universities Committee considered establishing Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC) for the review of QA process for self-financing sub-degree programmes, and for advice on the classification into the Qualifications Register. All along, the formal accreditation authority for all other providers, the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) has transformed into Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) when the Cap 592 Legislation was introduced in 2007. It was interesting that the first non-local programme to receive local validation under the new ordinance was introduced in 2011.

Self-financing degree programme

Before introducing Associate Degree to Hong Kong, extension arms of universities have begun to offer degree programmes. Hong Kong Baptist University was the first higher education institution to offer Bachelor of Education (Honours) in Primary Education to practising primary teachers in 1994 and later Early Childhood Education to meet a new training requirement and knowledge development for in-service pre-school teachers.

There have been self-financing degree programmes offered by post-secondary institutions like Shue Yan and Chu Hai all along. The quality of such programmes came under the purview of HKCAA and were regulated under Cap 320. Over time, the programmes and its own QA system at Shue Yan were considered to have matured to receive university status in December 2006.



Rapid expansion of Associate Degree and Higher Diploma programmes

It can be seen that the developments of the continuing education sector and the post-secondary education sector in 1990 provided an environment for quick expansion in the new millennium. So with the Government's decision in 2000 to expand the participation rate in tertiary education, many providers were keen to respond.



Quality Assurance (QA)

Common Descriptors for Associate Degree (AD) and Higher Diploma (HD) Programmes

When the AD was first introduced to Hong Kong education system in 2000, the entry requirements, duration and amount of credits were all different among course providers. Noting this disparity, the Federation proposed a common standard for the awards among its members and for the rest of the providers. In collaboration with the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and with full support of its members, the Federation undertook a consultancy study on the subject matter and produced the first version of Common Descriptors for AD programmes. It facilitates the recognition of the award that became a prime qualification of the Qualifications Framework (QF) over the years with the latest version (2011) embracing another main award of QF Level Four, Higher Diploma. This latter award has evolved over the last few decades and now it is well defined with depiction of its difference from the Associate Degrees. Now all providers have to comply with these descriptors.



Good Practices in QA



The other area that required attention in the rapid expansion of higher education was quality assurance. As many providers were initially continuing education providers and did not have a wealth of experience in formal full time education, many institutions were required to upgrade or enhance their QA systems. Together with the Government, an Expert Group comprising representatives of course providers, QA experts and the QA agencies were formed to develop a handbook on *Good Practices in Quality Assurance* for the sector. The Handbook combines general principles, institutional experience and example descriptions. It is hoped that each institution may establish stringent processes to ensure sub-degree programmes offered would meet international standards and provide quality outcomes for learners.

In 2005, the Joint Quality Review Committee was established to review the QA aspect of the extension units of the eight UGC funded institutions that were engaged in the provision of self-financing sub-degree programmes. All formally accredited programmes can be found in the government websites named iPASS (www.ipass.gov.hk) and Concourse (www.cspe.edu.hk). These websites have enhanced the sector's transparency and enabled easy access of information by the community.



In addition, it serves as an important source of reference for our students, parents and other interested parties to keep abreast of the development of the sector.

Qualifications Framework (QF)

The idea of a QF was crafted by the Working Group on Continuing Education of the Education Commission in 1999 to facilitate the development of lifelong education in Hong Kong. The purpose was to enable learners to arrange learning pathways between the three systems of formal education, continuing education and vocational education as well as the career world. The government picked up this idea and introduced the concept that programmes and awards that have been formally quality assured can appear on the Framework. The Education and Manpower Bureau announced the formal establishment of Qualifications Framework and the Associated Quality Assurance Mechanism in 2002.

The corresponding infrastructural work of legislation and reorganization of Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) into Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) was completed in 2007. With legislative standing, the Hong Kong QF was officially launched in 2008 and all qualifications recognized can be found in Qualifications Register (QR) - a free online database for reference of the general public. The Council now acts as the Accreditation Authority and Qualifications Register Authority of QF.

The Federation has been closely involved in both the consultation and the development of the QF through projects: Use of credits under the QF and Standardization of Award Titles under the QF.



Qualifications Framework was officially launched in May 2008

FSTE Projects

Project Yi Jin / Yi Jin Diploma

In 1999, the Government commissioned the Federation to devise a remedial programme for school leavers who were unable to obtain a formal qualification of a pass in five subjects (including English and Chinese) in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) so that they could obtain a qualification equivalent to school leaving certificate for employment and further education purposes upon completion. Thus, the Project Yi Jin (PYJ) was launched in October 2000. As it was functionally equivalent to a school-leaving certificate as its stated purposes, many students pursued full-time and part-time further education while others obtained government and other jobs. In the PYJ years (2000-2012), a total of 57,849 students successfully completed the programme.

With the implementation of the New Academic Structure and the cessation of the HKCEE, the PYJ has lapsed by the end of the 2011/12 academic year and has been replaced by the Yi Jin Diploma (YJD) Programme pegged to the new 3-3-4 system in the 2012/13 academic year.

YJD continues to serve as an alternative pathway for school leavers as well as adult learners to obtain a



Joint Registration day with over 10,000 visitors

qualification recognised by the Government for employment purpose and by education institutions for further study in the formal and continuing education system. In short, it enables students to build a firm foundation of generic skills and general knowledge, strengthens their motivation to study and facilitates the developing of self-learning skills for the pursuit of further study. It is an important and essential component of a holistic education system. It is also a very good example of the ongoing collaborative work between the Federation and the Government.

YJD comprises five core modules and three elective modules. The core

modules include Chinese, English, Mathematics, Liberal Studies and Communication Skills. As for the elective modules, a variety of practical subjects are available to choose from. Students who have successfully completed the programme will obtain a qualification deemed comparable to the attainment of Level 2 standard in five subjects including Chinese and English in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Examination (HKDSE). For students who have also successfully completed the Maths Plus elective subject, the qualification acquired is comparable to the attainment of Level 2 standard in five subjects including Chinese, English and Mathematics in the HKDSE.



FSTE Projects

Funded by Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme (QEGS)

Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness: Survey on Teaching Excellence in Teaching Sub-degree, Degree, and Top-up Degree Students in the Self-financing Post-secondary Sector in Hong Kong (2009-2012)

The project identifies, analyzes, assesses and disseminates teaching excellence for teaching sub-degree, degree and top-up degree students in the self-financing post-secondary sector in Hong Kong. A collection of fifty case studies on outstanding teachers was compiled into a publication entitled *Inspiring Teaching*, which is available in both English and Chinese version.



Development of Joint Teacher Training and Staff Development Project (2010-2012)

With the changes in structure and focus in the education reform, it is essential to have continuous staff development for current teachers, to enhance their knowledge and upgrade their teaching skills in order to achieve higher teaching effectiveness. The project provided an Induction

Training Programme for new teachers, an Intensive Teacher Training Programme for new and current teachers hoping to upgrade and enhance their teaching skills and organized staff development workshops for in-service teachers. Two rounds of Induction and Intensive Programmes attracted around 600 staff.

Models on Sub-degree General Education Curriculum and Exemplary General Education Courses (2011-2013)

The project aims to enhance the development and delivery of General Education (GE) of sub-degree programmes through sharing of expertise among universities and sub-degree providers. A number of forums, seminars and workshops were held to cover GE course design, teaching and learning, assessment strategies, and quality evaluation and improvement for GE teachers and administrators. Fulbright Scholars from the United States supported and participated in the project. A *General Education Guidebook* collecting good practices, sample curriculum and exemplary GE courses was published in October 2013.



A guidebook on GE curriculum and exemplars of GE courses was published in October 2013.

Funded by Quality Enhancement Support Scheme (QESS)

Teacher Competency Framework and related outcome-based professional development programme for teachers of self-financing post-secondary education sector (2013-2016)

Building on the strengths of and issues emerged from the QEGS "Teacher Training Project", this project aims to develop a Teacher Competencies Framework for self-financing post-secondary education sector in Hong Kong. The Framework contains a number of knowledge and skills dimensions, a progressive ladder within each dimension and descriptors for each level so that practitioners will understand their present positions and the subsequent movement.

Towards a Sub-degree General Education Framework - Facilitating Credit Recognition and Transfer (2014-2017)

Building on the success of the QEGS GE project, this project aims to enhance the quality of GE courses in the sub-degree sector in Hong Kong and take sub-degree GE further towards the goal of achieving smoother credit recognition by, and articulation to, the degree sector, with a view to facilitating credit recognition and transfer. The development of a few widely accepted GE framework/curricula, and a publication on GE Transfer Practice will be the major deliverables.



Beyond 20 Years

Looking ahead, the Federation will continue to place equal emphasis on lifelong learning and continuous professional development courses for mature individuals, as well as full-time programmes for secondary school leavers, providing a second chance and alternative pathways for learners during various stages of their life horizon.

The Federation will continue to serve as a platform for exchanges amongst our members and with our partners, as well as to perform an advocacy role for our sector, to advance our mission and to further raise the quality and standards of self-financing tertiary education in Hong Kong.

Important Dates

1999

The Centre for Professional and Continuing Education of Hong Kong Polytechnic University was reorganised and renamed as School of Professional Education and Executive Development

1956

Department of Extra Mural Studies of HKU was established, as the first continuing education unit in the region (renamed HKU SPACE in 1992)

2000

HKU SPACE Community College and College of International Education, HKBU established

1965

Department of Extramural Studies of CUHK was established (renamed School of Continuing Studies in 1994 and School of Continuing and Professional Studies in 2006)

2000

Project Yi Jin was launched, as a qualification comparable to 5 passes in HKCEE including English and Chinese, for further study and employment

1971

Hong Kong Shue Yan College was established (upgraded to Hong Kong Shue Yan University in 2006)

2000

The Chief Executive proposed in the Policy Address that within ten years, 60% of Hong Kong senior secondary school leavers would receive tertiary education

1975

School of Continuing Education of HKBU was founded as one of the seven schools or faculties of the University

2001

Lingnan Institute of Further Education and VTC School of Business and Information System (SBI) were established

1980

Hang Seng School of Commerce (HSSC) was established (upgraded to HSMC to offer programmes at bachelor degree level in 2010)

2001

VTC School of Business and Information Systems (SBI) was established

1982

Vocational Training Council (VTC) was established

Important Dates

2004

The Education and Manpower Bureau started to seek views on '3+3+4' academic structure

2005

Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC) was established by the Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) of Hong Kong to oversee the quality of sub-degree programmes offered by the self-financing units of the UGC institutions.

2007

HKCAA was reconstituted and renamed as Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) under the Ordinance (Chapter 1150)

2008

QF and QR were officially launched

2012

HKU set up Centennial College

2014

Celebration of FSTE's 20th anniversary.
Proposed in the 2014 Policy Address that from 2015/16, the intake of senior-year undergraduate places in UGC-funded institutions will progressively increase by a thousand bringing the total to 5,000 by 2018/19

1985

Caritas Francis Hsu College was established

1989

Open Learning Institute was established (upgraded to The Open University of Hong Kong)

1990

Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) was founded as an independent statutory body to provide authoritative advice on academic standards of degree programmes in higher education institutions in Hong Kong

1991

Centre for Continuing Education of City Polytechnic of Hong Kong was established (renamed as School of Continuing and Professional Education while the Polytechnic retitled as City University of Hong Kong in 1994)

1992

The Li Ka Shing Institute of Professional and Continuing Education (LiPACE) was established as one of the five units of the Open University of Hong Kong

1994

The Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions (FCE) was established (renamed as Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education in 2012)