

Guidelines for Recruitment and Admission Practices

Preamble

Members are committed to delivering quality education and will thus ensure fairness and transparency in their student recruitment and admission practices.

Members respect the spirit and stipulations of the Common Descriptors for Associate Degree and Higher Diploma Programmes and will not adopt measures that may have the effect of frustrating or circumventing them. The same applies to their own self-financed full-time and award-bearing programmes at the undergraduate level and below for which entry requirements are clearly stated.

Members agree to abide by the following guidelines for their student recruitment and admission activities for their own self-financed full-time and award-bearing programmes at the undergraduate level and below.

Members agree that the following guidelines should be published for general information.

Guidelines

Recruitment Ceilings

1. Recruitment ceilings for each programme should be as approved by the relevant QA authority (note: for institutions under UGC or institutions with reviewable or limited self-accrediting status, the University Senate or equivalent, or a body with its delegated authority, for all others the HKCAAVQ. In the case of HKIEd, there are two possible scenarios - programmes within the ambit of Teacher Education would be under its Senate and those outside would be under HKCAAVQ).
2. Alongside academic approval in (1) above, recruitment ceilings should be noted by the relevant body of the institution responsible for strategy, budget and resources. Administrative targets for budgeting, management or monitoring purposes should not exceed recruitment ceilings as approved by the relevant QA authority.
3. Subsequent changes to recruitment ceilings should receive the prior endorsement of the relevant QA authority from which the original approval was obtained.¹

¹ Two conditions apply here. Firstly, for the determination of recruitment figures, calculation is based on the final admission figure and not the number of conditional offers made. Secondly, within a margin of 5%, prior endorsement can be replaced by retroactive approval.

4. In the setting of recruitment ceilings, the sufficiency of facilities, the availability of suitable teaching staff, the maintenance of an appropriate staff/student ratio, as well as an appropriate proportion of part-time staff to full time staff ratio, are relevant considerations.
5. In the setting of recruitment ceilings, consideration should be given to the interplay between the capacities of each programme and the overall capacity of the institution.
6. The flexibility to be allowed for programmes which require specialist facilities and/or specialist staff must be restricted because of capacity constraints.

Admission Requirements

7. The percentage of students deviating from the standard admission requirements should not exceed 5% on a programme basis, or 3% on an institutional basis. Special admission quota must be treated as exceptions and should be used following detailed examination of the applications on a case-by-case basis.
8. When a student is admitted into a programme which has articulation arrangement to a programme at the next level, the additional requirements for articulation must be explicit and made transparent at the time of admission.
9. Guaranteeing en bloc credit transfer to a higher level programme at the time of admission to the lower level programme should not be made.
10. Institutions should establish clear policy and stringent rules on credit transfer and advanced standing. With regard to AD and HD programmes in particular:
 - (a) Advanced standing may only be considered for a qualification when all of the following requirements are met:
 - i) Post-Hong Kong Advanced Level (HKAL) / post-Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) in terms of academic level, obtained after pursuing programmes of reasonable credit size benchmarking Level 4 and above of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF); and
 - ii) Obtained from a recognised institution; and
 - iii) Obtained by study and examination.
 - (b) Advanced standing will depend on the length of the programme leading to the qualifications obtained by the applicant and should not exceed a specified percentage (say, 50%) of total credit points of a 2-year AD/HD programmes.

Recruitment Incentives

11. Where recruitment incentives are used, these incentives must not be so significant as to induce students to make choices based on material considerations rather than their academic needs.

12. Small gifts in the form of “learning aides” are allowed. But the value of the item must not exceed 0.5% of the annual tuition fee.
13. Upon admission, students can enjoy flexible payment of tuition fees under established schemes, such as payment by installments; but no financial rebate or discount is allowed, including ‘group’ or ‘early bird’ discounts.
14. Refund of fees to students under specific circumstances is allowed but the policy should be clearly stated. There should be a period beyond which no refund would be available.
15. Pre-admission incentives / activities, such as outdoor training, war game, and other team-building exercises, are allowed. These activities, however, must have educational value. The monetary value of such incentives should be capped at 0.5% of the annual tuition fee.
16. Pre-admission incentives / activities, such as personal loan of expensive equipment, are not allowed.
17. The offer of scholarships should be based on academic merits or special talents, vetted by a rigorous process, and awarded on a competitive basis.
18. The offer of financial assistance to students with hardship after admission and on a case by case basis is allowed. Institutions can make their own judgment in the grant of such assistance but care should be taken that approval is based on demonstrable needs of the student and that in overall terms the assistance scheme will not produce an effect of a rebate or discount of fees being generally available.

Deposits and Refund Policies

19. Enrolment deposits are generally non-refundable to avoid holding up of multiple offers. Institutions can, however, provide refunds in justifiable cases depending on individual institution’s policy, e.g. students with financial difficulties or students who have accepted an offer from a UGC-funded institution for a government funded undergraduate degree programme.
20. Institutions should publish for general information their deposit and refund policy.