

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BRIEF

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) submitted a document entitled *Development Blueprint: Becoming a University of Education* (“the Blueprint”) to the Education Bureau (EDB) in June 2007. The document outlines the development plans for the Institute for the next ten years including but not limited to the repositioning of the Institute as a University of Education. Upon receiving the Blueprint, EDB has invited University Grants Committee (UGC) to examine the document and to give its expert views on the proposals therein. UGC has subsequently set up a Review Group, led by Professor John Niland, to consider the matter. UGC submitted a Report of the Review Group to EDB in February 2009 (copy of the executive summary of UGC’s *Report of the Review Group on Hong Kong Institute of Education’s Development Blueprint* (“the Review Group Report”) is at **Annex A**).

A

2. At the meeting of the Executive Council on 23 June 2009, the Council ADVISED and the Chief Executive ORDERED that –

- (a) support should be given to HKIEd so that it can develop into a multidisciplinary institution to best enhance teacher education and promote excellence in the Hong Kong higher education sector;
- (b) additional student numbers (120 first-year-first-degree (FYFD) and 30 research postgraduate (RPg) places) above the level originally envisaged for the 2009-2012 triennium should be provided to UGC for allocation to HKIEd as soon as the relevant prerequisites have been fulfilled;
- (c) the Administration should continue its existing flexible approach in providing teacher education institutions, including HKIEd, with advice on future demands for teachers for different subjects and levels; and

- (d) the question of whether or not HKIEd should be granted university title should be considered at a later date.

JUSTIFICATION

3. The shape of Hong Kong's future is to a large extent determined by our ability to ensure the continued success of our higher education sector. Over the past decade, Hong Kong has continued to develop a diverse set of institutions with distinctive roles and missions, and doing so in the knowledge that the higher education system, when taken as a whole, is and should be greater than the sum of its parts. Role differentiation, however, is not meant to be a straitjacket that would make it impossible for our higher education institutions to evolve in response to the calls of changing times. Rather, an institution should be able to build on the strength of its core mission and capability in planning its future development.

4. Teacher education has consistently been a key theme of our higher education, as it is widely recognized in the community that the quality of our teachers impacts significantly on students' learning experiences and overall development and, in the long term, the quality of our talent pool and Hong Kong's competitiveness in an increasingly globalised economy. Since its foundation in 1994, HKIEd has come a long way in raising the quality of teacher education as a teacher education institution. The award of self-accreditation status for teacher education programmes in 2004 duly recognised HKIEd's capacity in this respect. While the issue of university title has received much publicity, it is subordinate to the broader and more important issue of how to help the Institute lift its capacity, acquire the attributes of a university and bring significant improvement to teacher education in Hong Kong. In considering HKIEd's future development, we cannot afford to lose sight of the latter. We note UGC's concerns that the direction and the nature of developments identified in the Blueprint will not genuinely transform HKIEd, and see UGC's recommendations as constructive to fulfilling the Institute's aspiration.

5. UGC states in the Review Group Report that, as evident from the experience of most teacher education institutions across different continents and cultures, developing a multi-disciplinary learning environment and strong research capacity are two of the keys to enhancing teacher education. Students trained in such a setting can have a richer learning experience, and are often found upon graduation to be more adaptive to the changing classroom and ever more challenging world, thereby being better equipped to tackle real life problems as a teacher. Hence, a monotechnic University of Education should not be established in the UGC sector. That said, while HKIEd does not yet possess all the attributes generally demonstrated by a university (including multidisciplinary, strong research capability and

complete self-accrediting status), UGC believes that the Institute has the capacity to expand and develop in research and other disciplines.

6. We see merits in UGC's view that an institution with complementary disciplines will present students with the best learning environment and agree that HKIEd can, if it takes the opportunity, develop into a multidisciplinary institution with a focus on education and a good spread of other complementary disciplines¹, and undertaking research and research training. Such development will on the one hand retain education as the core identity of HKIEd, hence avoiding the concern about mission drift and over-academisation of education, and on the other hand enrich the teaching, learning and research environment in the Institute, to the benefit of its students and faculty as well as teacher education in Hong Kong. It should, in this connection, be emphasized that such development should not lead to HKIEd's expansion into a comprehensive institution that goes beyond its core mission and capability, which could in turn result in excessive duplication and wastage of resources in the UGC-funded sector. Also, pursuing the stand-alone option will not and should not preclude HKIEd from continuing and exploring deep collaboration with other institutions on teaching or research, having regard to the best interests of its students.

Priorities for HKIEd

7. As HKIEd continues to evolve as an institution with a primary focus on teacher education, we believe that priority should be given to –

- (a) the strategic development of teacher education in Hong Kong;
- (b) the development of additional disciplines that are complementary to education; and
- (c) the development of a research and research training environment.

These were not the main foci of the Blueprint, which stressed self-financing activities beyond the traditional professional boundary of teacher education and export of its educational products.

¹ While it is difficult to define an academic discipline in precise terms, the Review Group suggests that a discipline area (such as Humanities, Creative Arts, Social Sciences, Information Technology, Health Studies, Management and Administration Studies, etc.) would require a fully fledged department that provides adequate academic and professional coverage and can offer one or preferably more major concentrations for a stand-alone degree.

8. In identifying new discipline areas, we believe HKIEd may wish to consider –

- (a) how the new discipline will contribute to its programmes in teacher education;
- (b) its existing strengths;
- (c) what sub-disciplines (other than education-linked) should be represented at HKIEd;
- (d) employment opportunities for students on graduation;
- (e) avoidance of inappropriate overlap with other Hong Kong universities; and
- (f) opportunities for teaching and research collaborations with other universities in the new discipline(s).

Specifically, HKIEd may wish to consider some of the proposals presented in the Blueprint, including those relating to research environment, programme offerings, continuous professional development and research-based teaching in the context of the above priorities and in view of the other comments in the Review Group Report.

9. We note UGC’s concerns about HKIEd’s proposed shift towards self-financing activities beyond the traditional professional boundary of teacher education and export of its educational products. We agree that such activities could absorb the energy of HKIEd management and staff and deflect them from more important priorities above for the successful transformation of the Institute as well as the implementation of the “3+3+4” academic structure. The community will expect the Institute to remain committed to its core mission, i.e. teacher education, and be fit for purpose. HKIEd will thus have to take into account the internal competition for resources and find ways to effectively combine such expansion with the needs of Hong Kong in considering future expansions in the areas in question.

Further support for HKIEd

10. Against the above considerations, we believe that UGC’s recommendations provide a credible and workable basis on which the Government can formulate its further support for HKIEd. We also note that such support should not come at the expense of other higher education institutions.

Development of additional disciplines

11. To facilitate HKIED's development of a minimal spread of disciplines complementary to education, we recommend providing HKIED a maximum total of 120 additional FYFD places per academic year for the three new discipline areas. These new places will be provided on top of the existing 14 500 FYFD places approved for the 2009-2012 triennium. HKIED's proposals for new disciplines should be assessed to ensure they have the attributes identified in paragraph 8 above and UGC is the most appropriate body to carry out the assessment. There will be further discussion between the Institute and UGC in the light of the Government's decision to provide HKIED with the resources and FYFD places required to pursue its further development. While it will be up to HKIED to come up with detailed proposals regarding what the additional discipline areas may be, we believe the community expects that they will be complementary to and supportive of HKIED's main focus on teacher education.

12. HKIED will also have to obtain accreditation from the Hong Kong Council on Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) for the programmes offered under the three new discipline areas, as its present self-accrediting status applies to teacher education programmes only.

13. Given that HKIED has to go through the above processes, it is difficult at this stage to predict exactly when HKIED can start to provide the new programmes, as it would be difficult to predict the time that HKIED might need to take to satisfy the relevant requirements. Nevertheless, we believe it is achievable for HKIED to start the new programmes in the three additional discipline areas within the 2009-2012 triennium. We will earmark necessary resources to accommodate this development.

14. In line with the existing practice, all the 14 620² FYFD places will form the central pool for allocation to UGC-funded institutions in the 2015-2018 triennium on the basis of the merits of their relevant Academic Development Proposals (ADPs), and all institutions will have to compete on an equal footing in that and subsequent exercises.

² Viz. 14 500 plus 120 FYFD places per academic year.

Development of research capacity

15. To support further development of HKIEd's research capability, we recommend providing HKIEd, through UGC, with a total of 30 RPg places, to be spread over three years. The Review Group Report suggests that, prior to any RPg allocation, HKIEd should discuss with UGC its research framework and, among other things, satisfy UGC that it has the capability to provide such research places and is committed to providing adequate supervision and support for the graduate students concerned. Accreditation by HKCAAVQ will similarly be required if the RPg places are in disciplines that lie outside teacher education. Whilst it would be difficult to predict the time that HKIEd might need to take to satisfy the relevant requirements, we again believe that it is likely for HKIEd to be able to start to offer some RPg places in question within the 2009-2012 triennium. We will earmark necessary resources to accommodate this development.

Flexibility in manpower planning

16. UGC recommends that the Government should continue to take a flexible approach in planning the manpower dimension in teacher education. Since the 2008/2009 rollover year, the Administration has been taking a liberal approach in providing advice on forecast of supply and demand of teachers to HKIEd for reference. This has proven to provide much needed flexibility to HKIEd in its planning. We agree with UGC that this flexible approach, which has also been adopted for the 2009-2012 triennium, should be continued in future.

Granting of university title

17. In considering whether a higher education institution should be granted the university title, the Administration will take into account all relevant factors, including the quality and standard of its academic programmes, the level and mix of programmes offered, the quality of students and standing of academic staff, research capability, internal governance, quality assurance structures and the extent of self-accrediting powers, resources available to the institution, and the public interest.

18. As a UGC-funded institution, HKIEd is already funded on the same basis as the other seven UGC-funded institutions. We agree with the assessment of UGC that HKIEd is not at this point in time ready to be granted the university title, and believe that the developments now envisaged, including the offering by HKIEd of new programmes complementary to and supportive of teacher education and the enhancement of its research capability, represent the necessary steps that HKIEd should take as it strives to develop into a university with teacher education as the primary focus.

19. Following the implementation of these necessary steps, HKIEd may, when it is ready and willing to do so, submit to the Government a formal request for being granted the university title. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the development of new programmes complementary to teacher education and the building up of research capacity will not automatically lead to a university title. Before such a title may be so granted, HKIEd must be able to demonstrate that it already possesses the qualities and attributes commonly expected of a university. This implies that the new disciplines and research programmes will need to be in operation long enough for their quality to be assessed. Otherwise, we will be degrading the value and meaning implied by the university title, with adverse implications for the higher education sector as a whole. Accordingly, upon receipt of a request for being granted the university title from HKIEd, the Government intends to invite UGC to conduct a special review having regard to the matters referred to in paragraph 17 above. The Government will then take a view on the request in the light of UGC's advice and other relevant considerations.

20. It would not be pragmatic to try to predict at this stage the time that the relevant processes would take, not to mention their likely outcome, and much will depend on HKIEd's efforts and whether it can succeed to develop the qualities befitting a university in the coming years. It should be pointed out that, if HKIEd's bid to acquire the university title eventually succeeds, consequential amendments will have to be made to the Hong Kong Institute of Education Ordinance (Cap. 444).

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

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21. The proposal has financial and sustainability implications as set out at **Annex B**.

22. The proposal is in conformity with the Basic Law, including the provisions concerning human rights. It has no productivity, civil service, economic or environmental implications.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

23. On matters concerning tertiary education, especially with regard to UGC-funded institutions, the Administration seeks the advice of UGC. The LegCo Panel on Education discussed the subject on 16 April 2009. HKIEd management, staff members and students present at the meeting expressed their desire for HKIEd to be granted the university title.

PUBLICITY

24. A press release will be issued on 24 June 2009. A spokesman will be available to respond to enquiries.

BACKGROUND

25. HKIED was formally established in 1994 by merging the four former Colleges of Education (i.e. Grantham, Northcote, Sir Robert Black and the Hong Kong Technical Teachers' College) and the Institute of Language in Education. Offering sub-degree (SD) teacher education programmes at the initial stage, HKIED started to offer programmes at the degree and above levels in September 1998. In March 2004, HKIED was granted self-accrediting status in respect of its own teacher education programmes at degree and above levels. During the 2009-2012 triennium, HKIED will provide about 440 taught postgraduate, about 480 FYFD intakes and 1 293 SD publicly-funded places each year at an annual recurrent funding of about \$510 million.

ENQUIRY

26. For enquiries on this brief, please contact Ms Amy Wong, Principal Assistant Secretary for Education, on 3540 7468.

Education Bureau
24 June 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background to the Report

1. The Government has invited the University Grants Committee (UGC) to give expert advice on the development of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIED) in the context of the HKIED's Development Blueprint. The Terms of Reference provided by the Government request the UGC to consider the Blueprint, having regard to the needs of the Hong Kong community, including the promotion of excellence in the higher education sector. The UGC set up a Review Group to advise on how to respond to the Government's request. This Report presents the findings of the Review Group, and its conclusions, as endorsed by the UGC.

2. Education is the essential foundation of a thriving and innovative society. The quality of education in a society is no less important for economic development. As competition among economies becomes more intense, the importance of education as the key to future success intensifies. Above all, following the structural shift from manufacturing to a service-oriented economy in recent decades, Hong Kong will need to develop strong and appropriate human capital to stay in the forefront of competition, and this will be affected by the quality of education delivered by its schools and teachers. One of the best ways to achieve this is to enhance Teacher Education programmes so as to train high quality teachers for Hong Kong's schools.

3. Where relevant, the Review has sought to advance the interests of higher education students and be attentive to approaches to Teacher Education that –

- attract and retain good quality students for the teaching profession;
- provide a rich learning environment at undergraduate and postgraduate levels; and
- provide flexible career pathways for students throughout their course of study.

Institutional Profile

4. HKIED is a relatively new higher education institution, whose first bachelor degree graduates emerged in 2001. The current strength of HKIED is in the training of teachers for the primary and pre-primary school sectors. Currently about 80% of new primary teachers in Hong Kong are graduates of the Institute. This dominant status is significant in considering changes to the profile of the institution. At secondary level, HKIED provides about 25% of new teachers. In addition, HKIED provides programmes at sub-degree and non-degree levels to a large student body. It has very few postgraduate research enrolments and receives no UGC-funded places for research.

International Trends – Teacher Education Institutions and Teacher Education Reforms

5. After taking account of the historic and recent trends in upgrading Teacher Education institutions around the world, the Review Group is persuaded that there is considerable merit in the path followed in most higher education systems in the developed world. Specifically, there are clear advantages to students, staff and the community in universities providing a multidisciplinary environment. Here students can choose to specialise in one or two disciplines, thus opening alternative career paths to them. In such an environment interdisciplinary research and teaching can also be fostered, and this adds to the richness of the student experience.

6. For teachers and Teaching Education institutions, powerful challenges are being driven by substantial changes in political, social and economic forces. These include the growth of an interconnected, complex global economy, unprecedented developments in communication technologies, and the effect of changing social mores on school and classroom environments. In many countries, education reform is driven by a community's perception of falling educational standards reflected in reduced student learning outcomes.

7. The Blueprint, research literature, and other materials provided by HKIED demonstrate the Institute's awareness of the profound changes in the international environment of Teacher Education, and for previously monotechnic Teacher Education institutions. This examination of international concerns, reforms and policy issues also provides the background against which the Review Group has evaluated HKIED's development proposals.

Evaluation of HKIED's Development Blueprint

8. Recent and emerging trends and transformational opportunities for Teacher Education institutions rather underscore the limitations in the Institute's own transformation agenda. The Review Group is concerned that overall, the direction and the nature of developments identified by HKIED will not genuinely transform the Institute and contribute to significant improvement of Teacher Education in Hong Kong. The Review Group is concerned that the large number of initiatives proposed in self-financing (including non-local) activities may absorb the energy of HKIED's management and staff, deflecting them from more appropriate and important endeavours, particularly in the concurrent implementation of the "3+3+4" reform. We suggest that HKIED should reconsider its development agenda by seeking support for a wider array of cognate disciplines, advancing continuing professional development, shifting its priority from the export market to meeting the needs of Hong Kong, or finding ways efficiently to combine the two. From discussions with the new management team at HKIED, and taking account of the supplementary materials provided, it appears to the Review Group that the Blueprint may represent a more conservative vision than that shared by the current leadership. We hope that HKIED will recognise the confidence being placed in its potential and will see the recommendations in this Report as constructive to its further development.

9. The aspiration to become a university is a recurring theme throughout the Blueprint. University title is presented as fundamental to many of the proposals contained in the Blueprint, even though it does not appear to be a prerequisite for implementing most of the proposals. It is the view of the Review Group that the Blueprint relies too heavily on the strength of university title to drive improvement and change, rather than on the active acquisition of attributes that would lead to real improvements in the Institute's teaching, learning and research environment. The Blueprint seeks university title in advance of achieving the attributes that would commend consideration of this proposal. In the mind of the Review Group there is an important issue of sequencing here. Those who advocate university title have generally done so based on notions of "status", social and cultural factors, and perceived precedents in Hong Kong. We are in no doubt that these views are strongly held, but we do not believe that the answer commonly suggested – university title now – addresses the key issue, which is the prior development and strengthening of HKIED.

10. The Review Group has given primary attention to the development and strengthening of HKIED as an institution set within the context of the Hong Kong higher education sector. In this endeavour, it has drawn on the experience of a wide range of relevant higher education systems where transformational changes have taken place.

11. In summary, the overwhelming majority of previously monotechnic Teacher Education institutions have gone through some form of transformation in order to establish a learning environment that is characterised by a minimum spread of complementary disciplines, research capability, and the significant majority of students being enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (as opposed to sub- and non-degree programmes).

12. The Blueprint presents a vision for HKIED to develop as a monotechnic University of Education. However, the Blueprint does not address the issue of how a single discipline environment would off-set the demonstrable benefits of multidisciplinary, or what superior benefits accrue to the monotechnic model which the Blueprint proposes. The Review Group is persuaded that the benefits put forward by HKIED in favour of retaining its single focus are outweighed by the widely recognised benefits of genuine broadening of the discipline range. In addition to the benefits of a broadened learning and research environment, the Review Group believes that the interests of students are better served by the introduction of genuine alternative academic and career pathways.

Recommendation 1

That a university of Education, particularly one of a monotechnic character, not be established in the UGC sector, and that other strategies be followed to lift the capacity of HKIED to best enhance Teacher Education and promote excellence in the Hong Kong higher education sector.

13. While the Blueprint proposes a transformation of HKIEd built on self-financing and regional developments (paragraphs 39-40), the Review Group believes that such an approach should be secondary to the central and primary mission of HKIEd, which is to develop and provide high quality Teacher Education and to be a source of educational research to support Hong Kong's schools. While the UGC encourages institutions to pursue more entrepreneurial activities, it places even greater emphasis on the central roles of its institutions, which is Teacher Education in the case of HKIEd. We are also mindful of the substantial challenge faced by HKIEd in preparing for the changes associated with the "3+3+4" reforms.

Recommendation 2

That HKIEd should give priority to:

- **the strategic development of Teacher Education in Hong Kong;**
- **the development of additional disciplines that are complementary to Education; and**
- **the development of a research and research training environment.**

14. HKIEd has made clear its determination to develop and strengthen the Institute, and the Blueprint contains proposals, other than those discussed above, that would support these goals. The Review Group welcomes the Blueprint's stated commitment, along with appropriate strategies, to develop research and research training capacity, and notes that these are consistent with our concern that HKIEd develop an appropriate research capability.

15. The Review Group also welcomes the Blueprint's proposals on extended involvement in continuing professional development and in-service programmes for teachers. Other sound proposals relate to international benchmarking and the quality of the Teacher Education experience for individual students.

The Future of HKIEd

16. Having examined HKIEd's Blueprint, its 2009-12 *Academic Development Proposal*, and other supplementary information provided by the Institute, and speaking with the Institute's management team, the Review Group believes that HKIEd has the capacity to expand and develop in research and other disciplines if it chooses to take such opportunity. However, more work needs to be done in these areas and enhancing Teacher Education quality should be at the centre of each of these developments.

17. Transformed along the lines suggested by the Review Group, HKIEd would offer a broadened scope of academic disciplines, while continuing to focus on its core Education programmes. We would anticipate particular strengths in early childhood and primary education, expansion in secondary education, postgraduate activities in provision of Postgraduate Diploma in Education, continuing professional development of teachers and expanding research programmes at the doctoral level. All of these changes are consistent with the proposals put forward by HKIEd in its Blueprint and other supporting materials.

18. To help HKIED move forward, the Review Group proposes that the Institute expand its degree-level student load, research capability and discipline base. We understand that HKIED wishes to retain its core identity with the discipline of Education, in an expanded and enhanced context.

19. The Review Group believes that the inclusion of other disciplines at HKIED will enrich the teaching, learning and research environment and provide flexible academic and career pathways for its students. We are confident that, appropriately planned, the Institute can develop strategies to ensure that such disciplinary expansion does not undermine educational coherence or deflect resources and focus from its academic goals.

20. The Review Group is well aware that HKIED wishes to follow a path that leads to university status. For this reason, we considered the attributes generally demonstrated by higher education institutions in a number of relevant jurisdictions that carry the name 'university'. Clearly, HKIED does not have those attributes at this time. However, the Review Group believes that by implementing the proposals set out in this Report, HKIED can strengthen its case for a re-consideration at some point in the future for university title. More importantly, these developments would provide a richer learning environment, broaden research opportunities, provide access to more diverse programmes and greater flexibility and career pathways for students. A further benefit would be the promotion of excellence in Hong Kong's higher education sector.

21. We have been persuaded by evidence that throughout the developed world, higher education institutions have been strengthened by broadening or partnering with other institutions in order to provide superior benefits to students, staff and the communities that they serve.

Institutional Integration Option

22. As our review of world-wide developments of Teacher Education institutions has shown (Chapter 2), most cases of upgrading of Teacher Education involved mergers with other monotechnic or multidisciplinary institutions. Such mergers and other forms of institutional integration have been expressed through the formation of faculties of Education or other federated structures that allow Education academics to pursue discipline-specific goals within a broader scholarly setting.

23. The Report describes some of the benefits to HKIED, Teacher Education in general and the Hong Kong higher education sector that are likely to flow from institutional integration. These include the immediate opening of access to an array of established, accredited, academic disciplines to enrich the Institute's Education programmes; the attainment of university status for the Education programmes and their staff and students in a relatively short time frame; and the inclusion in an active research community with opportunities for interdisciplinary research.

24. Compared to developing into a stand-alone multidisciplinary institution, partnership with an established university would allow HKIED to implement the majority of this Report's proposals while pursuing its own Education-focused goals in a relatively short time frame and at a reduced cost to the Hong Kong community.

Stand-Alone Option

25. HKIED could also address all of the recommendations in this Report to strengthen the institution and Teacher Education in Hong Kong by developing into an Education-focused, multidisciplinary institution with research capability. With this option, HKIED could work toward a unique and distinctive vision. The new institution could add value to the Hong Kong higher education sector if it develops in a planned and coherent manner. Such planning must take account of the education needs of Hong Kong as well as the academic, research and employment opportunities for its students.

26. The Review Group proposes that if the stand-alone option is chosen, HKIED would be expected to develop into an institution offering a good spread (for example, at least three) of discipline areas in addition to Education. This prerequisite of a minimum discipline spread in the academic footprint of a university reflects established practices in other jurisdictions, including Mainland China.

Recommendation 3

That HKIED should seek to implement the proposals set out in this Report by one of two options:

- (a) develop into a multidisciplinary institution with a focus on Education and other complementary disciplines, primarily offering undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes and undertaking research and research training; or**
- (b) partner with an existing university in order to provide a multidisciplinary learning and research environment and flexible career pathways for its students while developing other proposals that are congruent with the mutually agreed development plans of HKIED and the partner university.**

Financial Implications

27. Several recommendations in this Report carry financial implications. The Review Group considers that Teacher Education is such a vital area within the overall Education policy that it is worth additional investment by the Government. It would not be desirable or reasonable if extra funding to HKIED is to be at the expense of the other UGC-funded institutions. However, beyond whatever additional Government funding becomes available to HKIED, the UGC also welcomes private funding or other innovative income sources, and is open to new strategies towards that end. While the financial implications of the integration or stand-alone options are difficult to project,

we appreciate that the public and the Government will wish to have some idea of the costs, and these are provided in the Report.

Manpower Planning

28. HKIED, like other Teacher Education institutions, is subject to the Government's goal of balancing teacher supply with demand. Given that this can profoundly affect HKIED, since all its UGC-funded programmes are currently shaped by manpower planning considerations, the Review Group invites the Government to continue to take a flexible approach towards balancing teacher supply and demand. This will enable HKIED to make longer-term plans, whether it goes forward as a stand-alone institution or as an institute partnered with an existing university.

Recommendation 4

That Government:

- **approach the institutional development of HKIED as a matter requiring additional funding, over and above existing levels of funding provided to UGC; and**
- **continue to take a flexible approach in planning the manpower dimension in Teacher Education.**

The Challenges Ahead

29. The Review Group is confident that HKIED's management is committed to advancing the Institute and has the vision and capacity to implement far-reaching changes. That being said, the Review Group emphasises that the changes proposed, whether implemented in the context of institutional integration, or as a stand-alone institution, are very challenging and likely to consume the human and financial resources and creative energy of the Institute for several years to come.

30. The Review Group sees great potential for HKIED to advance to a significant new level of achievement and standing. We believe that becoming a monotechnic university (of Education) would set the sights too low, and would not be in the longer term interests of HKIED or its graduates. Beyond this, such a path would not serve to promote excellence in the higher education sector. HKIED does not have an appropriate spread of attributes of a university, including multidisciplinary, deep research capability and self accrediting status beyond its Teacher Education programmes. Unless it achieves university status through institutional integration, HKIED would need to demonstrate that it had undergone a significant transformation before seeking re-consideration of its status by taking the stand alone, multidisciplinary option. The Review Group recognises that this transformation is a serious and arduous exercise made more so by the concurrent demands of the implementation of "3+3+4".

31. In considering the challenges and opportunities set out in this Report, the Review Group proposes that HKIED be provided with the support it may need to examine and explore the options proposed. The Council of HKIED is encouraged to

supplement its own counsel with advice from external experts with experience of institutional change of the types proposed. UGC will endeavour to provide all reasonable support and advice to the HKIEd Council while it develops a planned and coherent approach to its development opportunities.

Conclusions

32. The Review Group's suggestions are made with the student learning experience at the forefront of our deliberations. If the suggestions of this Report are implemented, graduates of HKIEd will have a greater variety of courses to choose from, either at HKIEd itself, or in a programme organized jointly with a partner institution, and be better equipped for tackling real world problems and accessing more career options.

33. The output of an active research environment at HKIEd will inform undergraduate programmes, and influence policy and curricula in Hong Kong's schools. Proposals included in the Blueprint and the supplementary materials should ensure that research students will work in research teams and will enjoy regular interactions with fellow research students through local and international research networks.

34. The Blueprint lays out a vision for the future of HKIEd based on changes to the title and direction of the Institute. After evaluating that vision, and engaging with the management of HKIEd, the Review Group supports the development of research and research training at the Institute, and proposes the further development of HKIEd into a multidisciplinary institution. The Review Group believes that its suggestions will promote excellence in the Hong Kong higher education sector and will provide a strong foundation going forward for HKIEd and Teacher Education in Hong Kong. This also will serve the institution well in the event it decides in the future to re-submit itself for consideration for the university title.

Implications of the Proposal

Financial Implications

Based on current price levels, the estimated annual recurrent cost for providing the additional student places is \$76 million for the 120 first-year-first-degree (FYFD) places and \$11 million for the 30 research postgraduate (RPg) places in full implementation. Of this total annual recurrent funding of \$87 million, \$65 million will be met by redeployment of resources already allocated to Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) in the following areas –

- (a) Resources of some \$60 million a year made available by the removal of the monotechnic premium currently given to HKIEd¹; and
- (b) Resources recouped from HKIEd due to under-enrolment in HKIEd's Professional Upgrading Courses (PUC)². We have assumed that \$5 million a year could be made available for redeployment.

The remaining additional cost of \$22 million will be met from the Secretary for Education (SED)'s operating expenditure (OPEX) envelope. How the total recurrent funding of \$87 million would be phased in would depend on the readiness of HKIEd in offering the programmes.

2. The additional student places may also give rise to additional recurrent funding requirement in student financial assistance in the form of grants and loans. We estimate that for each year, around \$7.1 million for grants (to be borne by SED's OPEX envelope) and \$3.2 million for low-interest loans (to be borne by the Centre) would be required for the additional student places.

3. Separately, there may be one-off costs required for the transformation such as those associated with curriculum development, course accreditation and the build up of a research environment. We

¹ This monotechnic premium has been provided to HKIEd since 2005/06 to cushion against the constraints on its flexibility of operation brought about by a single discipline focus (such as the limited ability to absorb manpower cycles, which is a lesser problem for multi-disciplinary institutions). The justification for the monotechnic premium falls away with the addition of the 120 new FYFD places, and that pending further discussion with HKIEd, the amount should be withdrawn in phases and be fully removed by the time the 120 additional FYFD places are in place.

² The \$5 million is derived by assuming a 15% under-enrolment rate in the PUC programmes which have experienced under-enrolment in recent years, ranging from 9% in 2005/06 to 27% in 2007/08.

expect that such costs should be borne by HKIEd from its reserves. As regards academic facilities and/or student hostels for the additional students, the existing facilities at HKIEd will be sufficient to cater for the needs of these students based on the existing formulae for calculating space requirement.

Sustainability Implications

4. Developing a multi-disciplinary learning environment and strong research capacity in our major teacher education institution will enhance teacher education which impacts on the quality of our teachers, and in turn will uplift the students' learning experiences. This will help enhance the quality of our workforce and is conducive to the sustainability principle of achieving a competitive economy.