

Hong Kong's self-funded colleges undergo rigorous, transparent quality checks

PUBLISHED : Wednesday, 05 July, 2017, 5:14pm

UPDATED : Wednesday, 05 July, 2017, 9:49pm

COMMENTS: 0



I refer to Regina Ip's letters ([“Quality checks for all self-funded colleges in city are long overdue”](#), June 8) and ([“Ensuring a quality education in HK must remain prime concern”](#), June 27).

While I appreciate Mrs Ip's point that there is the need to install a unified quality assurance system for both publicly funded and self-funded institutions, I wish to make it clear to readers that it does not mean there is no quality assurance mechanism for self-funded degree-granting institutions.

In 1990, the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) was established to validate degrees offered by the then Hong Kong Baptist College, Hong Kong Polytechnic and City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, before these institutions became universities in 1994.

Subsequently, HKCAA evolved to become the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) in 2007; and one of its main responsibilities is to accredit self-funded academic institutions and their degree programmes.

As president of Hang Seng Management College, which is a self-funded degree-granting institution, I have participated in a number of institutional review exercises and programme accreditation exercises conducted by the HKCAAVQ.

These usually involve an on-site visit of two to three days by an international panel of academic peers and professional experts appointed by HKCAAVQ and there are rigorous meeting sessions with senior management, teachers, industry experts and students.

Before each panel visit, the college has to submit a detailed programme proposal, to explain – among other things – the rationale behind offering the programme; market surveys; the intended learning outcomes; the teaching staff’s qualifications; the resources implications; and, graduates’ career pathways.

Each accredited programme also needs to go through another re-accreditation exercise during the fifth year of operations, before it can be continued.

In contrast, there is no need for publicly funded universities with self-accrediting status to go through such a mandatory international programme accreditation process.

We do not object to the suggestion for “a single quality assurance body for the whole post-secondary system”, but we wish to clarify that there has always been a rigorous, robust and transparent quality assurance mechanism in place for all self-funded degree-granting colleges administered by the HKCAAVQ.

The chief executive’s proposal of giving local students enrolling in such accredited private institutions a direct tuition subsidy of HK\$30,000 per year will ensure education equality.

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