



# ACCREDIT NOTE

## A Credible Quality Assurance Mechanism



Office Opening January 7 2005

## Will Help Qualifications Framework Succeed



The Qualifications Framework cannot succeed without being underpinned by a credible quality assurance mechanism. Professor Arthur K C Li, GBS, JP, Secretary for Education and Manpower, emphasised at the opening ceremony of the new office of HKCAA on January 7, 2005.

"The Government decided in February last year to establish a Qualifications Framework, or QF in short. This is an infrastructure to formalize and support qualifications of academic, vocational and continuing education. The introduction of the QF will provide more diversified progression pathways and enhance the relevance and quality of education and training programmes. It will also bring wider recognition to the skills, knowledge and experience of workers, and promote lifelong learning. All these will contribute to the upgrading of the quality of our manpower and help maintain Hong Kong's overall competitiveness in the global economy."

"Through the establishment of the QF, both education and training providers, employers and the public can better understand the range of qualifications in Hong Kong and how different types of qualifications can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce. They can then make informed choices. The QF also provides linkages between different types of vocational and academic qualifications so as to foster a flexible lifelong education system."

"The development of the QF is making good progress. In vocational sector, we have so far formed Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) in six industries. These include Printing and Publishing, Watch and Clock, Chinese Catering, Hairdressing, Property Management, and Electrical & Mechanical Services. We are assisting these Committees to develop competency-based qualifications for their industries, which will become a blueprint for education and training programmes of the industries. We are also assisting them to formulate a suitable Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism for the industry. Our target is to set up a total of 20 ITACs by the end of 2006 and we are working hard to achieve this goal."

"The QF cannot succeed without being underpinned by a credible quality assurance mechanism. We have entrusted HKCAA to take up this quality assurance role. Courses offered by the providers, which are not self-accrediting, have to be quality assured by HKCAA. I am pleased that the Council has taken steps to prepare itself for the new role. This includes reforming the Council's operating and financing models to cater for institutions of different sizes offering academic or vocational programmes of different levels, nature and objectives. The new models should help the Council to reach out beyond its current clientele to the wider market of new players."

Professor Li believed strongly in the partnership between the Government and HKCAA. "Both of us must share the same vision and work hand in hand to make this happen for Hong Kong. Over the past 14 years, HKCAA has done an excellent job in maintaining and monitoring academic standards of higher education institutions in Hong Kong. I have every confidence that the Council will succeed in encouraging the development of a vibrant and responsive education and training market while upholding quality."

**"The introduction of the QF will provide more diversified progression pathways and enhance the relevance and quality of education and training programmes."**



Professor Arthur K C Li, GBS, JP, Secretary for Education and Manpower, giving a speech at the opening ceremony of the new office of HKCAA on January 7, 2005.



# HKCAA Has An Important Role in the Overall Government Manpower Development Strategy



This was pointed out by Mrs Fanny Law, GBS, JP, Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower, during her speech at the Council Dinner on January 7, 2005.

"Due to historical reasons, over 30% of our workers have had nine years of basic education only. Such an educational profile is inconsistent with the vision of Hong Kong being Asia's world city and an international city of China. Every year, close to 25,000 students leave secondary schools without a full certificate, that is, without getting a "pass" in five subjects in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination. In a knowledge society that puts a premium on qualifications, these young people are grossly disadvantaged in an increasingly competitive employment market. Hence, there is an urgent need to upgrade the knowledge and skills of our workforce, as well as reform the school curriculum to provide choices to suit the aptitude and interests of our students. On continuing education, we have significantly increased opportunities in recent years with an expansion of post-secondary education, and the establishment of the skills upgrading scheme, the Continuing Education Fund and Project Yi Jin. HKCAA has played an instrumental role in developing the quality assurance criteria for sub-degree programmes, and accrediting the institutions and programmes of non-UGC-funded institutions."



Mrs Fanny Law, GBS, JP, Permanent Secretary for Education and Manpower, speaking at the Council Dinner held in January 2005.

"The emphasis today is to motivate students to learn and help them learn how to learn. We have introduced, on a pilot basis, career-oriented courses in the senior secondary curriculum to cater for students who may not be academically oriented. So far, the feedback is encouraging. One of the key recommendations in the reform of the senior secondary and university structure is to introduce more applied learning, or career-oriented studies, into the senior secondary curriculum in the form of electives. Unlike academic subjects, the assessment of student achievement in applied learning will be school-based."

"In line with these developments, the ambit of HKCAA will be expanded to include both academic and vocational qualifications, and the membership of the Council also reflects this new role with a balance of expertise from the academic, business and professional fields. The new role also entails changes to the governance structure and operating model of HKCAA. There is tremendous potential for HKCAA to expand its reach and influence in Hong Kong as the over-arching authority that oversees the quality assurance of both the education and vocational sectors in Hong Kong."



## HKCAA Has a New Office



HKCAA moved to a new office at Cambridge House of Taikoo Place, Quarry Bay. MTR, buses and trams very well serve the office and there are ample parking spaces. The open plan layout enhances communication and interaction, and is much more user-friendly. In all, there are newer and better facilities at a much cheaper rent, when compared with the old office at Duddell Street.

The new office was officially opened on January 7, 2005 by Professor Arthur K C LI, GBS, JP, Secretary for Education and Manpower.

## New Members to the Council



HKCAA wishes to thank the following outgoing members of the Council for their outstanding services: Professor Richard Ho Man Wui, JP, Mrs Elizabeth Li, Mr Raymond R Wong and Professor Xu Demin. We welcome the following new members of the Council.

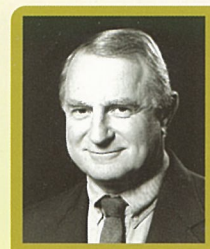


Council Members pictured with Council Chairman, Dr York Liao (3rd from right, front) and Vice-Chairman, Mr Herbert Hui Ho Ming, JP (2nd from right, front).

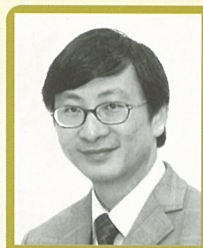
**Professor PAN Yunhe** is President of Zhejiang University. He is a pioneer in the fields of Intelligence Computer Aided Design (ICAD) and Computer Art in China. He has introduced Artificial Intelligence (AI) into computer graphics and CAD technology, and proposed a series of models of synthetic reasoning and imagery thinking. Professor Pan has won numerous awards, including "The 2nd-class National Award for Scientific and Technological Advancement" from the Ministry of Science and Technology, China and "The 1st-class National Award for Scientific and Technological Advancement" from the Ministry of Education.



**Professor David Benjamin WOLF** went to college at University of California at Berkeley. After serving in the US Peace Corps and working in corporate industries, he completed a PhD in Education at Stanford University. After teaching at various colleges, Professor Wolf became Executive Director of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges in 1996, from which he retired in July 2001. In this capacity he served as the Chair of the Council for Regional Accrediting Commissions, and as Administrative Officer for the Community College Leadership Development Initiative. Since then, state neglect led Professor Wolf and his colleague, Steve Weiner, to become active in preserving higher education access in California; they founded the Campaign for College Opportunity for which they now serve as Senior Consultants.



**Dr Eden WOON**, JP is the CEO of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce. He served as Executive Director of the Washington State China Relations Council from 1994-97. A career U.S. Air Force officer who retired as a Colonel in 1993, Dr. Woon served as the China policy adviser to the U.S. Secretary of Defense from 1989-94, and was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing from 1983-85. Dr. Woon, who has a Ph.D in Mathematics, was an Associate Professor of Mathematics in the late 1970s at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Dr. Woon is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations based in New York. He is on the boards of the Hospital Authority, Ocean Park Corporation, the Hong Kong Tennis Foundation, and the Board of Governors of Hong Kong Design Centre. He is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Securities and Futures Commission. He was named Director of the Year in Hong Kong in the non-profit category in 2001.



**Professor John C.K. LEE** is the Dean of Education at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Chairman of the Hong Kong Educational Research Association and a Fellow of the Hong Kong Primary Educational Research Association. He is also an adjunct or guest professor of many leading universities in Mainland China. With external grants of more than HK\$120 million since 1998, Professor Lee has led many major projects including the Accelerated Schools for Quality Education Project.



**Dr LUK Tei, Lewis** has been Executive Director of Hutchison Harbour Ring Limited since 1991 and Deputy Chairman since 2002. He was a senior partner of a local law firm and a Director of a major toy company in Hong Kong. In 1995, he was awarded the "Young Industrialist Awards of Hong Kong". With a group of industrialists, Dr Luk formed The Toy Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong. In 1999, he coordinated with eight trade associations to form "The Professional Validation Council of Hong Kong Industries" which greatly assists the Hong Kong industrialists in acquiring related professional qualifications. Dr Luk is an adjunct professor of City University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and is also a Fellow of University of London.



## Reaching Out

The Hong Kong Education and Manpower Bureau and the Ministry of Education of the Central Government signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Mainland and Hong Kong on Mutual Recognition of Academic Degrees in Higher Education in July 2004. HKCAA was named as the designated body in the Memorandum for updating and disseminating information of the education system and degree programmes offered by local higher education institutions.

The Council represented by a Senior Registrar of the Secretariat attended the Australian Universities Quality Agency 2004 Forum held in Adelaide, Australia. In October the same year in Sydney, the Executive Director attended the UNESCO/OECD Australia Forum on Trade in Educational Services and chaired a discussion session. He also took the opportunity to visit the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board and the Australian Universities Quality Agency.

The Executive Director and a Senior Registrar were invited by the University of Macao for an official visit in October 2004. They also met with the Head of Academic Affairs Bureau and representatives of the Higher Education Bureau of the Macao SAR Government.

The Council Chairman and the Executive Director paid a few visits to local education and training providers to obtain feedback on the work of the Council and maintain good working relationships. On December 8, 2004, the Council Chairman and the Executive Director met the media. The press conference provided a good opportunity for the Council to inform the public of its work, its reform efforts and its future plans.

The Executive Director and a Registrar attended the INQAAHE 8th Biennial Conference in Wellington, New Zealand and the APQN 1st AGM in March 2005. Over 200 participants from 58 countries attended the conference. The themes featured the effectiveness of quality assurance, quality assurance in trans-national issues and impacts on diversity.

The Council Chairman, Executive Director and a Registrar, together with three officials from the EMB, visited UK in May 2005. The purpose of the visit was to understand the mechanism and process of QF in UK, its cost and benefits as well as to learn from UK experiences on how problems are overcome. The delegation met two Ministers, visited over 17 organizations and spoke to over 30 officers from these bodies. They included standard setting bodies, awarding bodies, providers, funding and regulating bodies, as well as government departments. The visits enhanced the team's understanding of the National QF of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Useful working contacts were established.

In June 2005, the Executive Director was invited to give a talk by the Korean Presidential Committee on Education Innovation, a committee of educationalists appointed by the President of Korea to advise on education reform. His speech on diversity and quality of higher education in the Hong Kong context was well received.



Dr York Liao, Council Chairman and Mr Peter Cheung, the Executive Director met the media.



A UK visit led by Dr York Liao, Council Chairman (2nd from left).

## HKCAA hosted the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) Meeting

HKCAA hosted a two-day meeting of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) on January 31 and February 1, 2005. The meeting was sponsored by the World Bank and chaired by Mr Peter Cheung, Executive Director of HKCAA. Delegates attending were from 21 quality assurance agencies in the Asia-Pacific area.



The prime aim of APQN is to build capacity in quality assurance across the region through a programme of studies, workshops, seminars, information exchange, cooperation agreements, consultancies and staff exchange. Mr Cheung was elected the first APQN President. Professor VS Prasad of the NACC, India is the Vice President. Dr David Woodhouse of the Australian Universities Quality Agency is the Secretary and Treasurer. At the moment, many of the APQN's activities are supported by a development grant from the World Bank.

## Signing of Memorandum of Co-operation between HKCAA and AUQA



HKCAA signed a Memorandum of Co-operation with the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) on January 31, 2005. The AUQA is an independent national agency charged to promote, audit and report on quality assurance in higher education in Australia. The ceremony took place in Hong Kong and coincided with the inaugural meeting of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network. The signing was witnessed by Mr Edward Yau, JP, Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower and Mr Murray Cobban, the Australian Consul General, and guests from local and overseas.



Mr Peter Cheung and Dr David Woodhouse signed the Memorandum of Co-operation and witnessed by Mr Edward Yau, JP, (1st from left) Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower and Mr Murray Cobban (1st from right), Australian Consul General in Hong Kong.



# Developing the Qualifications Framework (QF)

## Qualifications Register (QR)

The Qualifications Register will be an online database storing information of all quality-assured learning programmes, qualifications and training providers for public access. A contractor was selected by tender to develop the QR. Intensive work on system design is in hand. Self-accrediting universities and selected government training scheme secretariats are involved in the development of a plan for the smooth uploading of information onto the QR upon its rollout.

## Registration Guidelines for the 4-stage Quality Assurance Processes

Registration Guidelines for interested education and training providers were prepared in order to help them register their courses and qualifications under the QF. With comments from the EMB and training providers of various sizes, the Guidelines were further reviewed for refinement. A Chinese version of the Guidelines is being prepared, which when ready will be posted onto the HKCAA website. The Guidelines will also appear in VCD format with an application wizard.

## Demand Forecast Study

A Demand Forecast Study was conducted in early 2005 to find out the size of the "first wave" of applications and to identify the "pull" and "push" factors necessary for a successful launch of the QF. Nine focus group meetings were held and a number of factors that might influence the readiness of training providers to come forth have been identified. The findings of the study will be considered by HKCAA and the EMB in formulating strategies for implementation of the QF.

## Pilot Studies

EMB invited HKCAA to conduct a pilot study on courses operating in the market without Industry Training Specifications (ITS). HKCAA conducted test runs for courses including those under the Skills Upgrading Scheme (SUS) and Employees Retraining Board (ERB) and is also considering how to register courses by a sampling approach. HKCAA has also just embarked on a pilot study to develop guidelines/illustrative materials for providers and subject specialists on how to use the Generic Level Descriptors.

## Expansion of the Pool of Subject Specialists

HKCAA is to recruit and train a target of 300-500 subject specialists and experienced practitioners covering 34 identified vocational sectors, and to form a pool of panel chairmen. These 34 vocational sectors cover a large variety of government-subsidized schemes. 193 new subject specialists have so far been recruited. These specialist practitioners will mainly undertake programme validations at QF Levels 1 to 3, which are not adequately covered by the existing 1,100 HKCAA subject specialists whose accreditation experiences are predominately at Associate Degree/Degree and above levels.

## Contacting HKCAA

Address : 23/F, Cambridge House, Taikoo Place, 979 King's Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong

Tel no : (852) 2801 7480

Fax no : (852) 2845 9910

Email : [contact@hkcaa.edu.hk](mailto:contact@hkcaa.edu.hk)

Website : [www.hkcaa.edu.hk](http://www.hkcaa.edu.hk)

# Accreditation Activities and Other Services

## Accreditation

The accreditation process has now been streamlined to feature a smaller panel, shorter visit duration and at a lower level of accreditation fees, while maintaining the rigour of review. HKCAA professional staff now serves as both member and secretary of the Panel.



HKCAA Panel pictured with representatives of Hong Kong College of Technology.

From early March to June, an institutional review and a total of 20 programme validations/revalidations were conducted. This year saw a variety of additional Major Subjects added to a number of HKCAA accredited sub-degree and degree programmes. Four non-local degree courses including courses at Master and Doctoral degree levels operated by foreign institutions in Hong Kong sought accreditation service. There is an Associate Diploma that is new to the work of the Council. The Associate Degrees and Higher Diplomas were validated/revalidated to provide post-secondary education in a wide range of disciplines spanning Nursing, Health, Social Work, Business, Information Technology and Hospitality Management.

## Assessment Services

HKCAA undertook various assessments on demand. These services include registration of non-local courses, qualifications assessment for individuals, assessment of reimbursable courses under the Continuing Education Fund, accreditation of Insurance Continuing and Professional Development Programmes, and assessment of the delivery of Project Yi Jin in secondary schools and of the Career Oriented Curriculum courses.



HKCAA Panel at the Career Oriented Curriculum site visit.

HKCAA has recently revised the accreditation criteria for the Insurance course providers in light of the revision on the CPD requirements by the Insurance Authority. In May, HKCAA was appointed by the Estate Agents Authority to serve as an accreditation authority for their CPD activities.

As regards qualifications assessment, there has been an increase in demand, as prospective teachers holding non-local qualifications seek service from HKCAA before they lodge their applications to the EMB for appointment to teaching posts.

Apart from assessing course applications, a total of 24 annual audits of courses for the Continuing Education Fund were conducted between December 2004 and April 2005.

Assessment of the Pilot Project Yi Jin/School Collaboration Scheme to further extend into the 2005/2006 academic year has been commissioned by the EMB.

# Secretariat NEWS

## In-House Workshop and Sharing Sessions

An in-house workshop and two sharing sessions were held for HKCAA professional staff for development purposes.

- Ms Robyn Harris, Audit Director of Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) conducted a two-day workshop on November 29 and 30, 2004. The workshop covered the work of AUQA, its vision, activities and systems, and focussed on experience sharing.
- Two other sharing sessions were separately arranged on November 8 and 9, and December 2, 2004. The former was conducted by Ms Cheryl Jones, University Quality Manager of Murdoch University, Australia and the latter, by Mr Ian Hawke, Director of Queensland Government Office of Higher Education, Australia. Both looked into quality assurance in higher education for the benefit of HKCAA staff.



Staff Outing.

## New Staff Members

Between March and May 2005, the Council warmly welcomed five new staff to the Secretariat. They are Ms Yvonne Tang, Ms Doreen Lai, Ms Hailey Lam, Mr Sam Ho and Mr Roger Cheung.

**Ms Yvonne Tang** has replaced Mr Neo Ng as the Executive Officer on the return of the latter to the Civil Service. Prior to joining HKCAA, she worked for the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, Radio Television Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, and the Urban Council.

**Ms Doreen Lai**, Assistant Registrar, was an executive with the Capital Projects Division of Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation and The Art School of Hong Kong Arts Centre before joining HKCAA.

**Ms Hailey Lam** was an Executive Officer at The University of Hong Kong before joining the Council as Assistant Registrar. She has also worked in the Leisure and Cultural Services Department as an organiser of cultural activities.

**Mr Sam Ho**, Executive Assistant, was from the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE), The University of Hong Kong.

**Mr Roger Cheung** joined the Council as a part-time IT consultant. Previously, he was the IT Director of the Duty Free Shoppers.