



Report of the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education

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Foreword

Vocational education is the education which prepares people for specific professions, trades and industries. It equips people with the expertise, skills and technical know-how. Vocational education also plays an indispensable role in nurturing the necessary manpower to support the economic growth of a society.

During the 1960s and 1970s, vocational education was a common choice among youngsters in Hong Kong. Things changed over time with the many developments in the education arena during the past three to four decades, such as the promulgation of universal basic education since 1978, the rapid expansion of post-secondary education opportunities since 2000, and the introduction of the new academic structure in 2009 which provides free education to all up to Secondary 6. Coupled with the traditional Chinese thinking that “intellectuals hold the highest regards”, the mentality of valuing traditional academic pursuit over vocational education prevails in Hong Kong, even though some do realise the merits of vocational education and the fact that traditional academic pursuit does not necessarily offer a youngster a reputable and successful career pathway in future. Besides, there is a common misperception that vocational education is confined to education of the lower levels. It is timely and necessary to step up efforts in raising public awareness of the benefits of vocational education and engineering a paradigm shift in the society through repositioning, rebranding, image building and promotion.

Against the above, the government set up the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education in June 2014 with a view to mapping out a strategy and concrete proposals to raise public awareness of vocational education and recognition of its value. Members of the Task Force are drawn from relevant backgrounds, including those from the vocational education and training sector, various business and industries, as well as those possessing good knowledge of education, parent education, youth and public relations. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all Members for their constructive advice in the past year in order for us to come up with this Report. Their diverse background and expertise have contributed to a balanced consideration of the recommendations now submitted.

I look forward to a changing social paradigm which would lead Hong Kong to an even brighter future.



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Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education

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Terms of Reference

Vocational education plays a pivotal role in integrating education and employment in support of Hong Kong's development, as well as providing flexible multiple pathways for young people. Noting the need to step up efforts in promoting vocational education to students, parents, teachers, schools and the general public, the Government has decided to set up a Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education.

The Task Force will advise the Secretary for Education on a strategy and concrete proposals to raise the awareness and recognition of vocational education in the community, taking into account good local and international practices.

In discharging its functions, the Task Force may gauge the views of key stakeholders, set up sub-committees, co-opt members, conduct studies and engage professional services as and when necessary.

The Task Force is expected to submit a report to Secretary for Education within a year.

Executive Summary

Vocational Education and Training

Vocational education and training (“VET”) has been playing a pivotal role in broadening the learning opportunities for school leavers and in-service personnel as well as nurturing the requisite human capital in support of Hong Kong’s development. However, there is an entrenched bias among some in the community in favour of traditional academic pursuits. More can be done to promote VET as an attractive pathway and help tackle the entrenched perception of VET being a second choice.

Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education

2. The Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education (“Task Force”) conducted a series of public engagement activities during the past year to measure the stakeholders’ perception towards VET and gauge their views on how to better promote VET in Hong Kong. The activities included the conduct of a survey through questionnaires, focus group interviews, discussion sessions with secondary school principals, roundtable discussion with different stakeholders, as well as invitation of views and suggestions from major VET providers. The Task Force has also made reference to practices in implementing and promoting VET outside Hong Kong.

Recommendations

3. With the findings, the Task Force recommends a three-pronged strategy to promote VET covering the following –

- Strategy 1: Rebranding VET;
- Strategy 2: Strengthening promotion; and
- Strategy 3: Sustaining efforts.

4. The Task Force recommends –

Strategy 1: Rebranding VET

- (1) the government to rebrand VET in Hong Kong as “vocational and professional education and training (“VPET”)” covering programmes up to degree level with a high percentage of curriculum consisting of specialised contents in vocational skills or professional knowledge;

Strategy 2: Strengthening Promotion

(a) *Promotion of Professional Image of VPET*

- (i) Publicity Campaign
- (2) the government to produce Announcement in Public Interest (“API”) on TV/radio by involving industry role models where appropriate. The API may also be broadcast on Facebook, YouTube, dedicated portal for VPET and other online media;
- (3) the government to produce TV drama series (including related publicity and production of DVDs), presenting real success stories of persons graduated from VPET programmes and make them continuously accessible to the public through the VPET Portal which facilitates guidance to students;
- (4) the government to continue to support major VPET provider(s) to organise large-scale skills competitions to showcase VPET students’ achievement and provide interactive activities for secondary school students’ experience, or even consider bidding for the hosting of such competitions in Hong Kong in due course with a view to raising public awareness of the professionalism of VPET and related industries as well as enhancing the skill level of local talent;



(ii) Campus Facilities of VPET Providers

- (5) the government to facilitate the provision of state-of-the-art facilities to VPET providers in order to provide conducive learning environment to VPET students and enhance the professional image of VPET riding on the existing support schemes or otherwise;

(iii) Quality of Programmes Offered by VPET Providers and Research Capability

- (6) VPET providers to enhance quality of their VPET programmes, and strengthen the support services to students where possible;
- (7) VPET providers to consider whether it is appropriate for them to engage in (more) research activities (which could be action research, applied research, technology-oriented research other than academic research) to inform teaching and learning, etc.;

(b) Provision of More Information about VPET and Related Career

(i) VPET Portal

- (8) the government to develop and maintain a VPET portal which gathers comprehensive and impartial information on VPET programmes and related industries in Hong Kong, as well as links up other relevant portals;

(ii) VPET Forum

- (9) the government, VPET providers and industry sectors to attend international VPET forums from time to time to keep abreast of the latest development of VPET worldwide;



- 
- (10) the government or VPET providers to organise local VPET forums from time to time with the participation of the industry sectors, in order to provide up-to-date industry and career information to secondary school students, parents and teachers;

(c) Promotion of VPET through Career and Life Planning Education

- (11) the Education Bureau (“EDB”) to encourage secondary schools to adopt a whole school approach in career and life planning education and enhance individual guidance and support to students to facilitate self-understanding and exploration of multiple pathways including VPET;
- (12) VPET providers and major chambers of commerce to arrange (more) training workshops cum visits for principals, teachers and career masters in secondary schools, with the facilitation of EDB through the Business-School Partnership Programme (“BSPP”) so as to provide them with the latest developments of VPET in Hong Kong and the related careers. Such training workshops cum visits should also be extended to prospective secondary school teachers pursuing teaching programmes in tertiary institutions as well as non-governmental organisations which play a role in offering articulation and career advice to students;
- (13) VPET providers and major chambers of commerce to arrange (more) taster programmes for secondary school students with the facilitation of EDB through BSPP;
- (14) VPET providers and major chambers of commerce to organise seminars and visits for parents of secondary school students for their better understanding of VPET and the related careers as well as the progression pathways, with the facilitation of EDB;

(d) More Contribution from Industries

- (i) Closer Collaboration with VPET Providers
- (15) the major chambers of commerce and VPET providers to have closer collaboration on the design and development of VPET programmes (including the curriculum, industrial attachment, etc.) such that the learning outcome could fulfill employers’ needs and expectation;



(16) the Vocational Training Council to regularly review the list of Training Boards to cover emerging industries so that manpower surveys would be conducted to better inform VPET training providers and prospective students of the areas with growing manpower demand;

(ii) Remuneration, Working Conditions and Progression Pathways

(17) the major chambers of commerce to encourage their members to devise comprehensive human resource strategy to attract and retain staff, covering the remuneration package, working conditions and progression pathways, etc.;

(e) Promotion of Applied Learning

(18) EDB to encourage course providers to arrange accreditation of more Applied Learning (“ApL”) courses under the Qualifications Framework (“QF”) where appropriate so that apart from the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (“HKDSE”), students completing ApL courses may obtain a separate QF-recognised qualification for further studies in the relevant fields or entry into the industries concerned;

(19) post-secondary education institutions in Hong Kong to give due consideration of the results of ApL courses attained by students in the HKDSE Examination in student admission as an incentive for students to take ApL and benefit from the experiences and also an incentive for their parents to support them to do so;

(20) the government to consider providing 100% grant subsidies to schools for the ApL course fees and encourage more schools to offer ApL courses based on their student profiles;

(f) Provision of Financial Support by the Government

(i) Pilot Training and Support Scheme (“Pilot Scheme”)

(21) the government to consider extending the Pilot Scheme to benefit more students pending a review;

(ii) Industrial Attachment (“IA”)

(22) the government to extend the IA initiative to benefit students pursuing full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree and undergraduate programmes where applicable;

(iii) Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions / Sectors (“SSSDP”)

(23) the government to consider extending the SSSDP if it is proven effective;

Strategy 3: Sustaining Efforts

(a) Influence by the Government

(24) the government to encourage the senior government officials to seize every opportunity to promote and support VPET on different occasions so as to demonstrate the government’s support and recognition of VPET as an integral part of the community;

(b) Promotion of Qualifications Framework

(25) EDB to enhance the publicity efforts on QF targeting at employers and the general public. Articulation pathways for lifelong learning and progression pathways for different industries under QF should also be further promoted;



(26) the major chambers of commerce to encourage their members to make reference to QF in recruitment and promotion, so as to increase the relevance of QF to learners and practitioners which would in turn help promote VPET; and

(c) Tracking Surveys on Attitude Change

(27) the government to conduct tracking surveys by involving relevant stakeholders to keep track of any changes in their attitude towards VPET.

1. Introduction

1.1 The provision, positioning and perception of vocational education and training (“VET”) have undergone tremendous changes over time, particularly with the introduction of new academic structure, the expansion of post-secondary education opportunities, the development of knowledge-based economy and the emergence of new generations of youngsters and practitioners with different value systems and mindsets. While VET can lead to promising career prospect and produce “masters of each trade”, there is an entrenched view among some in the community in favour of traditional academic pursuits and VET is commonly perceived as a second choice by different stakeholders.

1.2 In fact, VET plays a pivotal role in the education system, integrating education and employment as well as providing flexible and multiple pathways for school leavers and in-service personnel with diverse aspirations and abilities. On the other hand, it has been nurturing the requisite human capital in support of Hong Kong’s economic development. Despite the endeavors of the government and other parties in promoting the merits of VET, the existing efforts are considered insufficient to change the public perception against VET and more should be done to enhance the promotion effectiveness.

1.3 In the 2014 Policy Address, the Chief Executive (“CE”) highlighted that *“mainstream education is not a straightjacket that fits all young people as everyone has his or her own interests and abilities. The government should re-establish the positioning of vocational education in our education system and guide the younger generation in choosing their career”*. To this end, a series of measures was announced to support the development of vocational education, including the setting up of the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education (“Task Force”).

1.4 In the 2015 Policy Address, the CE articulated his vision that *“Adequate and quality manpower resources are the key to our sustainable socio-economic development”*. With nurturing local manpower as part of the strategy to address the new challenges brought by demographic changes, the CE highlighted that *“We need to create diversified job opportunities with promising prospects for the younger generation on the one hand, and provide them with varied learning, training and development opportunities on the other hand.”* No doubt, vocational education plays a key role in nurturing the local manpower.



1.5 The Task Force was set up in June 2014 with a view to mapping out a strategy to promote vocational education and raise public awareness of vocational education and recognition of its value. The Task Force Members are drawn from a mix of expertise and backgrounds, including those from the VET sector, various businesses and industries, education, youth and public relations and relevant government officials.

1.6 The Task Force has met four times since its establishment in June 2014. With the support of the Education Bureau (“EDB”), the Task Force conducted a series of public engagement activities to measure the stakeholders’ perception towards VET and gauge their views on how to better promote VET in Hong Kong. The stakeholders included secondary school students, their parents, teachers including career masters/mistresses, principals, VET students/graduates, VET providers including labour unions, employers of VET graduates, major chambers of commerce and industrial associations, youth associations, school sponsoring bodies, etc. The Task Force has also made reference to practices in implementing and promoting VET outside Hong Kong.

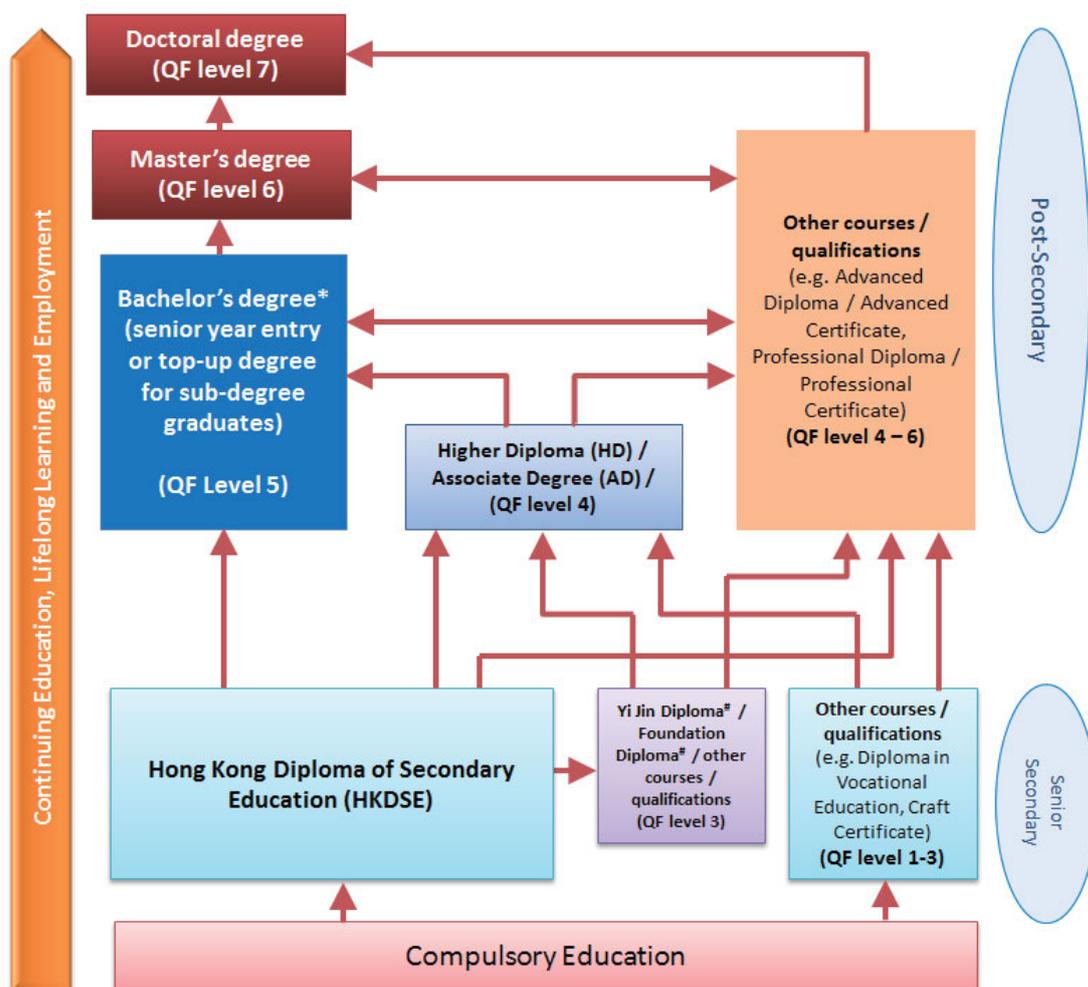
1.7 The detailed views and recommendations of the Task Force are set out in the ensuing Chapters and submitted to the Administration in July 2015 for consideration.

2. Overview of Vocational Education in Hong Kong

2.1 The Task Force notes that the government is committed to providing quality, flexible and diversified study pathways with multiple entry and exit points for secondary school leavers. Such flexible study pathways encourage youngsters to achieve their career progression in accordance with their individual ability, interest and desired learning mode. With varied study options available, pursuing higher qualifications after some years of employment is prevalent among practitioners in Hong Kong. This Chapter will present an overview of the provision of vocational education in Hong Kong at different levels, the relevant statutory and professional bodies, labour unions, as well as the policy initiatives related to vocational education.

2.2 To begin with, a diagram illustrating the articulation pathways under the education system in Hong Kong is shown below.

Chart 2.1 Overview of education system in Hong Kong



Note: The arrows in this chart denote *possible* articulation pathways only. Additional qualifications / requirements may be needed for some articulations.

* Under the new academic structure in Hong Kong, most bachelor's degree programmes consist of four years of study. Upon completion of AD or HD programmes, students are eligible to be admitted to senior year places of the bachelor's degree programmes or top-up degree programmes.

Successful completion of Yi Jin Diploma and Foundation Diploma is comparable to the attainment of Level 2 in five subjects, including Chinese Language and English Language in the HKDSE Examination.

Qualifications Framework

2.3 In May 2008, the government launched the Qualifications Framework (“QF”) with the objective of promoting lifelong learning and enhancing the competitiveness of the local workforce. It is worthy to note that QF has been underpinning the development of vocational education in Hong Kong, alongside academic and continuing education. QF is a seven-level hierarchy that orders and supports different qualifications, thereby facilitating articulation among academic, vocational and continuing education by providing a comprehensive network of learning pathways.



資歷架構
Qualifications
Framework



Chart 2.2 Seven-level hierarchy under the Hong Kong QF

QF Level 資歷級別	Choice of Award Titles for Different Levels 各級別可選用的資歷名銜					
7	Doctor 博士					
6	Master 碩士	Postgraduate Diploma 深造文憑 Postgraduate Certificate 深造證書	↑	↑	↑	↑
5	Bachelor 學士		Professional Diploma 專業文憑 Professional Certificate 專業證書	Advanced Diploma 高等文憑 Advanced Certificate 高等證書	Diploma 文憑	↑
4	Associate 副學士	Higher Diploma 高級文憑 Higher Certificate 高級證書	↓	↓	↓	↓
3						↓
2						↓
1						↓
						Foundation Certificate 基礎證書

2.4 Under QF, Specification of Competency Standards (“SCSs”) are drawn up by different Industry Training Advisory Committees (“ITACs”)¹, which set out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in different functional areas of the respective sectors, and provide a basis for course providers to design training courses including in-house training to meet the needs of the sectors. The use

¹ As at 1 January 2015, 19 ITACs have been established for 20 industries so far, covering 52% of the workforce in Hong Kong. The industries/sector covered are Printing & Publishing, Watch & Clock, Catering, Beauty & Hairdressing, Property Management, Electrical & Mechanical Services, Jewellery, Information & Communications Technology, Automotive, Logistics, Banking, Import & Export, Testing, Inspection & Certification, Retail, Insurance, Manufacturing Technology (Tooling, Metals and Plastics), Elderly Care Service, Security Services and Human Resource Management.



of QF credits and the policy and principles for credit accumulation and transfer introduced under QF have further enhanced articulation among qualifications from different sectors.

Vocational Education in Secondary Education

2.5 At the junior secondary level, students are progressively provided with career related experiences and relevant exposure through life-wide learning activities. Through participating in talks, workshops, camps and workplace visits organised by various organisations and commercial firms, junior secondary students could acquire an early sense of the world of work and explore different possibilities of their career pathways. At the senior secondary level, career-related and vocational education in secondary school is facilitated through a variety of learning opportunities: Applied Learning (“ApL”) courses and the career-related experiences embedded in the Other Learning Experiences activities. These programmes and activities complement the core and elective subjects of the senior secondary curriculum for holistic learning. ApL courses, which are subjects with stronger elements of practical learning linked to broad professional and vocational fields, have attracted a considerable number of students. They have been introduced as elective subjects for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (“HKDSE”) Examination. In the 2014/15 academic year, around 320 secondary schools offered 36 ApL courses in six different areas² for about 10 000 Secondary 5 and 6 students. Different courses³ are offered under each area of studies in ApL to better suit the learning interests and needs of students. Students may choose one or two ApL course(s) to understand fundamental theories and concepts, develop generic skills and career-related competencies necessary to prepare themselves for further studies and employment in the future. In the 2014 HKDSE Examination, there were over 4 330 candidates registered in ApL subjects. Attainment in ApL subjects is recognised for admission to post-secondary programmes either as elective subjects or considered for award of extra bonus or as additional information, depending on institutions, faculties and programmes.

² The six areas are Creative Studies; Media and Communication; Business, Management and Law; Services; Applied Science; and Engineering and Production.

³ Recently added and revised courses include Interior Design, Computer Game and Animation Design, Introduction to Cantonese Opera, Financial Markets and Operations, Law Enforcement in Hong Kong, Food and Beverage Operations, Sports and Fitness Coaching and Building Technology.



2.6 In the 2015-17 cohort, 12 out of 40 ApL courses have been quality assured for recognition under QF (QF Level 3) under a pilot exercise. EDB will continue the pilot exercise to further explore linking some more ApL courses to QF in due course so that apart from the HKDSE certificate, students successfully completing these ApL courses may obtain a separate QF-recognised qualification to facilitate further studies in the relevant fields or entry into the industries concerned.

Vocational Education at Post-secondary Level

2.7 At the sub-degree level (QF Level 4), 258 (63%) of the approximately 400 full-time sub-degree programmes offered in the 2014/15 academic year are Higher Diploma (“HD”) programmes⁴, accounting for 60% of the total sub-degree student enrolment. At least 60% of HD programme curriculum is devoted to specialised content in specific disciplines, professions or vocational skills. HD programmes seek to enable students to acquire the appropriate attitude, knowledge and skills to support their employment at the para-professional level. Examples include HD in Airfreight Management and Global Logistics and HD in International Hospitality and Tourism Management offered by the Vocational Training Council (“VTC”), HD in Pharmaceutical Dispensing offered by the Caritas Bianchi College of Careers, HD in Tourism Management (Airline & Cruise Services) offered by the Hong Kong College of Technology, etc. Apart from local post-secondary institutions, some other programme providers such as hospitals are also offering vocational sub-degree programmes, e.g. HD in General Nursing.

⁴ According to the Common Descriptors for HD under the New Academic Structure promulgated for compliance by all post-secondary institutions, at least 60% of HD’s curriculum must consist of specialised contents (e.g. learning related to concentrations, disciplines and professions and vocational skills, etc). At the end of the HD programme, the student should demonstrate, among other things, an acquisition of the attitude, theoretical knowledge and practical skills at the para-professional level of a certain discipline, and integration of theory with practice, so as to apply these principles more widely especially in an employment context.



2.8 At the undergraduate level (QF Level 5), some higher education institutions are also offering degree programmes with strong professional element. Examples include Bachelor of Architecture, Bachelor of Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Testing and Certification, Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing Major), Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy, etc. Besides, articulation opportunities to senior year places of University Grants Committee-funded undergraduate programmes and top-up degree programmes in the self-financing sector are provided to sub-degree graduates. Separately, the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (“THEi”) under VTC has started offering undergraduate programmes with strong professional elements starting from the 2012/13 academic year, with disciplines such as design, engineering, hotel operations management and health care.

Other Vocational Education Programmes

2.9 Apart from the above, there is a wide array of full-time and part-time certificates and diploma programmes primarily targeting young people having completed Secondary 3 to 6 and in-service practitioners who wish to acquire training or formal qualifications using alternative pathways. Notable examples include VTC’s Diploma in Vocational Education programmes, apprenticeship schemes, Yi Jin Diploma (“YJD”)⁵ programmes as well as Foundation Diploma (“FD”) programmes. Other training providers are also operating varied programmes under QF to cater for the diversified aspirations and needs of secondary school leavers or in-service practitioners. Examples include –

- Professional Diploma in Property Management (QF Level 4) offered by the Caritas Bianchi College of Careers;
- Diploma in Hospitality Studies (Hotel and Catering) (QF Level 3) offered by the YMCA College of Careers;
- Professional Certificate in Property and Facilities Management (Maintenance Management) (Level 4) (QF Level 4) offered by the Hong Kong College of Technology;

⁵ Launched in the 2012/13 academic year, the YJD programme provides an alternative articulation pathway for Secondary 6 school leavers as well as learners aged 21 or above to obtain formal qualifications for the purposes of employment and further studies. The YJD programme is offered by some member institutions of the Federation of Self-financing Tertiary Education.

- Certificate in Cookery and Culinary Skills (Level 3) (QF Level 3) offered by FTU Employment Development Service Limited;
- Certificate in Health Worker Training (QF Level 3) offered by the Federation of Hong Kong & Kowloon Labour Unions; and
- Certificate in Teaching and Training Skills for Beauty Industry (QF Level 3) offered by the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions Training Centre, etc.

These are practically-oriented programmes with strong vocational content in specific disciplines.

Statutory Bodies

2.10 In Hong Kong, some statutory bodies are involved in providing services related to VET. The most notable one is VTC. Others include the Employees Retraining Board (“ERB”), the Construction Industry Council (“CIC”) and the Clothing Industry Training Authority (“CITA”).



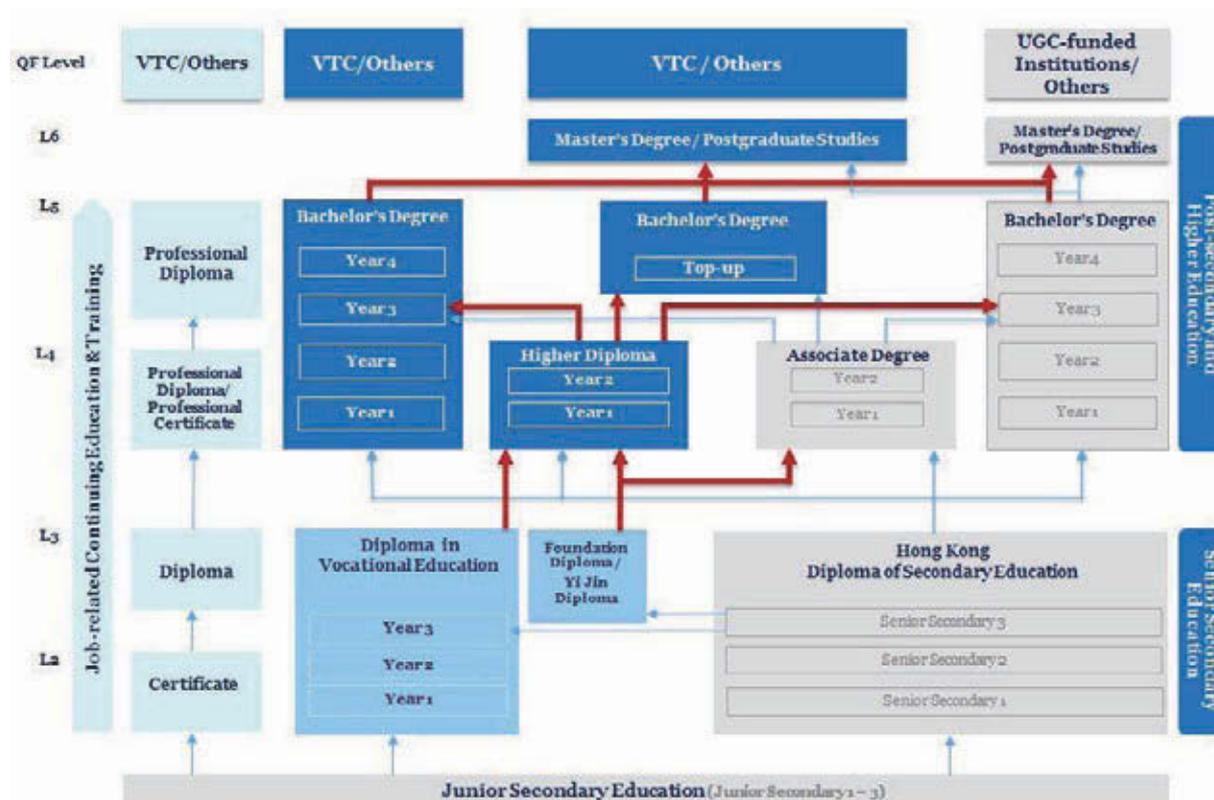
Vocational Training Council

2.11 VTC is a statutory subvented organisation and the major VET provider in Hong Kong. It offers a wide range of full-time and part-time VET programmes which lead to formal qualifications from post-Secondary 3 up to degree levels (i.e. QF Levels 2 to 5) with multiple entry and exit points and clear articulation pathways within the entire VTC system. Every year, VTC provides about 250 000 training places for people of different education levels with pre-employment and in-service programmes, including full-time degree, HD, diploma and certificate courses, in-service training programmes, training programmes for non-engaged youths and apprentice training. Different progression pathways for career advancement and lifelong learning are provided to students and industry personnel through 13 member institutions⁶ of VTC. The articulation pathways provided under VTC is shown on the next page.



⁶ They are THEi, Institute of Professional Education And Knowledge, School for Higher and Professional Education, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, Hong Kong Design Institute, International Culinary Institute, Hospitality Industry Training and Development Centre, Chinese Cuisine Training Institute (“CCTI”) (CCTI is to be renamed as Chinese Culinary Institute with effect from September 2015), Maritime Services Training Institute, Youth College, Pro-Act by VTC, Integrated Vocational Development Centre and Shine Skills Centre.

Chart 2.3 Articulation pathways under VTC⁷



Employees Retraining Board

2.12 ERB is a statutory body that co-ordinates, funds and monitors training and retraining courses and services. Its service targets are people aged 15 or above with an education attainment at sub-degree level or below. It provides a diverse range of courses under the Manpower Development Scheme, including full-time placement-tied courses for the unemployed, part-time non-placement-tied generic skills training courses and “Skills Upgrading Scheme Plus” courses with skills enhancement training for the unemployed and in-service workers as well as courses for special target groups. In the 2014-15 financial year, ERB provides 130 000 training places through over 400 training centres located across different areas in Hong Kong.

⁷ Source: VTC



Construction Industry Council

2.13 CIC is a statutory body comprising stakeholders of the construction industry. It provides advice and reflects needs to the government on behalf of the industry. It also deploys the collected levies to implement various measures to support the development of the industry, including nurturing manpower and enhancing the skill levels of construction personnel. Full-time courses are offered to train up craftsmen, supervisors and technicians in the construction field, while part-time courses are offered to in-service construction personnel for their continuing education. In 2015, CIC plans to provide around 8 700 full-time and 75 600 part-time training places to construction personnel.

Clothing Industry Training Authority

2.14 CITA is a statutory body that provides training courses for the clothing industry. Operating two training centres, it delivers both full-time and part-time courses at technician and craftsman levels or above ranging from certificate to bachelor's degree. In addition, it offers tailor-made integrated coaching for individual garment companies, catering for their particular needs. CITA also runs retraining programmes related to the clothing industry for ERB. In the 2014/15 academic year, CITA is offering about 1 100 training places.

Professional Bodies

2.15 In different industries, professional bodies are set up to facilitate knowledge and idea exchange with a view to raising the standing of professionals in Hong Kong. They provide a broad range of services to their members including continuing professional development for their career progression. Some of them may also regulate the discipline of a specific profession and are responsible for matters including practitioner registration and programme accreditation. As some of these professional bodies have affiliations with international organisations, they play a major role in enhancing the professional recognition of local industry personnel with their qualifications recognised both locally and overseas.

Labour Unions

2.16 Labour unions are established to protect the interests of industry personnel and develop dedicated welfare service to those. Devoted to strengthening the support to in-service practitioners, the unions contribute by reflecting the workers' needs to the government and relevant parties. Some of the unions also offer training courses to their members in order to promote their competitiveness through continuing education. Examples of such training courses are included in paragraph 2.9 above. Some unions also cooperate with other VET providers and professional bodies in operating training courses as well as participate in ITACs to help promote QF in the relevant industries.

Overall Picture of VET under QF

2.17 With the above, for better illustration, notable examples of VET offered at various QF levels are set out in the following table.

Table 2.1 Overview of VET in Hong Kong by QF level

Equivalent QF Level	Examples of Award Titles	Examples of Vocational/ Professional Education & Training
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doctor (e.g. PhD)	-
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master• Postgraduate Diploma / Certificate• Professional Diploma / Certificate	Some higher education institutions and training providers are offering postgraduate programmes with strong vocational/professional content.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachelor's Degree• Professional Diploma / Certificate	<p>Some higher education institutions including VTC's THEi are offering bachelor's degree programmes with strong vocational/professional content (e.g. engineering, design, landscape architecture and nursing).</p> <p>Some training providers are also offering other programmes, e.g. professional diploma/certificate, at this level.</p>

Equivalent QF Level	Examples of Award Titles	Examples of Vocational/ Professional Education & Training
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Diploma / Certificate • Advanced Diploma / Certificate • Higher Diploma • Higher Certificate 	<p>258 (63%) of the approximately 400 full-time sub-degree programmes offered in the 2014/15 academic year are higher diploma programmes, accounting for 60% of the total sub-degree student enrolment.</p> <p>Some training providers are also offering a variety of other programmes, e.g. professional diploma/certificate and advanced diploma/certificate at this level.</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma / Certificate 	<p><u>Within the secondary school system:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ApL subjects in HKDSE <p><u>Outside the secondary school system:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yi Jin Diploma - Foundation Diploma of VTC - Diploma in Vocational Education of VTC - Some training providers are also offering a variety of other diploma/certificate programmes at this level.
2 & 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate • Foundation Certificate 	<p>Many training providers are offering a variety of certificate/ foundation certificate programmes at these levels, including some courses offered by ERB.</p>

2.18 The following table also summarises some key figures related to the provision of VET but they are by no means exhaustive. Many programmes at degree and other levels are also vocationally/professionally oriented but not covered below.

Table 2.2 A snapshot of the provision of VET in Hong Kong

Number of Training Places/Students	
<u>Student enrolment for the 2014/15 academic year</u>	
<i>Secondary 5 and 6 students studying ApL courses</i>	10 000
<i>Students of HD programmes (excluding those offered by VTC which are covered below)</i>	15 000
<u>Training places provided by VET-related statutory bodies</u>	
<i>VTC</i>	245 000 [2014/15 academic year]
<i>ERB</i>	130 000 [2014-15 financial year]
<i>CIC</i>	8 700 full-time & 75 600 part-time [2015]
<i>CITA</i>	1 100 [2014/15 academic year]
Total	485 400

Population Policy and Manpower Projection

2.19 The Steering Committee on Population Policy (“SCPP”), chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, conducted a public consultation from October 2013 to February 2014 to gauge public views on strategies and measures to address demographic changes and challenges faced by Hong Kong. According to the analysis report on the views received, many comments were made about the need to improve the provision of vocational education and to ensure that post-secondary education matches the labour market and social needs. It is also necessary to give additional support to the development of continuing education, QF and sub-degree courses.

Besides, there were comments that particular industries were facing manpower shortage. Separately, according to the key findings of the Report on Manpower Projection to 2022 (“MP 2022”) released in May 2014⁸, ageing population will continue to be a trend while most economic sectors are anticipated to have an increase in manpower requirement from 2012 to 2022. SCPP noted the key findings of MP 2022 and considered it necessary to promote vocational education as a viable alternative pathway to academic routes, among other things, so as to minimise the skills mismatch and enhance the quality of manpower. The report issued by SCPP in January 2015 pursuant to the public consultation can be accessed at http://www.hkpopulation.gov.hk/public_engagement/pdf/PPbooklet2015_ENG.pdf. With the above, it is evidenced that a healthy development of VET is crucial to both population policy and quality manpower supply in Hong Kong.

Policy Initiatives Related to Vocational Education

2.20 As mentioned above, the CE highlighted in the 2014 Policy Address that *“mainstream education is not a straightjacket that fits all young people as everyone has his or her own interests and abilities. The government should re-establish the positioning of vocational education in our education system and guide the younger generation in choosing their career.”*, and announced a series of measures to strengthen vocational education and support its development alongside academic education. Apart from the initiative of setting up the Task Force, the other measures are elaborated below.

Pilot Training and Support Scheme (“Pilot Scheme”)

2.21 With the approval of the Legislative Council Finance Committee in July 2014 for a commitment of \$144 million, VTC has implemented the Pilot Scheme starting from the 2014/15 academic year to attract and retain talent for specific industries with a keen demand for labour, by integrating structured apprenticeship training programmes and clear career progression pathways. The Pilot Scheme targets Secondary 3 to Secondary 6 school leavers and eligible adult learners. Under the Pilot Scheme, apprenticeship training for industries which fulfill the criteria as mentioned in

⁸ The government conducts manpower projection from time to time to assess the broad trends of the manpower supply and requirements at the macro level in the medium term, as well as the potential manpower imbalances at different education levels. The key findings of the MP 2022 can be accessed at <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/panels/mp/papers/mp0520cb2-1524-5-e.pdf>.



paragraph 2.25 below will be provided to students alongside a guaranteed level of salary and incentive allowance. The training will normally last for four years. The students will study full-time foundation programmes⁹ at VTC during the initial phase (normally one year full-time study period); after that, they will attend part-time study whilst working on-the-job (study-cum-work period).

2.22 To enhance the attractiveness of the Pilot Scheme amongst young people, participating students will be provided the following salary and incentive allowances as an illustrative example –

- (a) During the training period –
 - (i) employers will commit to pay a minimum monthly salary of \$8,000 to the students during the study-cum-work period from the second to fourth years;
 - (ii) the industries/employers will offer an incentive allowance of \$30,800 in total to each student (on top of their monthly salary) over the entire four-year training period; and
 - (iii) the government will offer each student an average monthly incentive allowance of \$2,000 during the study-cum-work period from the second to fourth years; and
- (b) Upon graduation, employers will commit to pay a minimum monthly salary of \$10,500 to the students.

2.23 Depending on the nature and circumstances of each industry, the level and duration of studies as well as the timing and amount of incentive allowances to be given to students may vary from industry to industry. An illustrative example showing the mode of training and income to be received by a student under the Pilot Scheme is as follows.

⁹ Under the Government's 12-year free education policy, Secondary 3 school leavers joining the Pilot Scheme are not required to pay tuition fees. Students would have to pay for their own tuition fees if the 12-year free education has been exhausted.

Table 2.3 Illustration of the Pilot Scheme

Year	Mode of Study	Minimum Monthly Salary (\$)	Incentive Allowance		Total Monthly Income (\$)
			Monthly Subsidy (\$)	Funding Source	
1 st	Full-time	--	2,800 (for 11 months) *	Industry	2,800
2 nd	Part-time study alongside on-the-job training	8,000	1,500	Government	9,500
3 rd		8,000	2,000	Government	10,000
4 th		8,000	2,500	Government	10,500
Completion		10,500	--	--	10,500

* The total allowance offered by the industry will be \$30,800 (\$2,800 x 11 months).

2.24 Students will normally attain a Diploma in Vocational Education (QF Level 3) on completion of the apprenticeship training under the Pilot Scheme. Thereafter, VTC will provide a seamless academic progression pathway for those interested in pursuing further studies to obtain higher level qualifications on a part-time basis, including HD (QF Level 4) and bachelor's degree (QF Level 5).

2.25 The Pilot Scheme aims to cover industries meeting the following criteria –

- (a) the industry is facing labour shortage and/or ageing problems, and it has difficulties in hiring and retaining young people;
- (b) the relevant trades covered under the industry are very specialised and with a high level of technology contents; and
- (c) the industry is committed to providing allowance or subsidy to trainees and to offering a certain salary level to trainees who have completed the apprenticeship training and are willing to join relevant industries.



2.26 As at February 2015, the electrical and mechanical (“E&M”) services trades of the construction industry, printing industry, clock and watch industry and automobile industry have joined the Pilot Scheme, with over 370 enrolled trainees. It is estimated that the Pilot Scheme will benefit 2 000 students in total for two cohorts of intakes admitted to VTC’s apprenticeship training programmes for specific industries in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 academic years (they will start receiving the government’s incentive allowance starting from the second year of training). The Pilot Scheme may be extended in case there are unexpended funds after implementing the Pilot Scheme for these two cohorts.

Earn & Learn Pilot Scheme for the Retail Industry (“Retail Earn & Learn Pilot Scheme”)

2.27 To alleviate the manpower tightening problems of the retail industry, the Financial Secretary announced in the 2014-15 Budget Speech that the government had accepted the recommendations of the Task Force on Manpower Development of the Retail Industry and earmarked \$130 million to implement measures including \$70 million for a pilot training and support scheme under VTC for the retail industry. Similar to the Pilot Scheme, the Retail Earn & Learn Pilot Scheme provides vocational training of the retail industry alongside a guaranteed level of salary and incentive allowance. Secondary 6 school leavers are targeted and student-workers will be awarded a FD (QF Level 3) or HD (QF Level 4) upon successful completion of the 18-month/30-month programme. The Retail Earn & Learn Pilot Scheme was rolled out in the 2014/15 academic year for the FD programme. As at mid-April 2015, there were 196 student-workers under the Retail Earn & Learn Pilot Scheme. The first cohort of HD programme would commence in September 2015.

2.28 Under the Retail Earn & Learn Pilot Scheme, the government will offer each student-worker an average monthly incentive allowance of \$2,000. For the 2015/16 cohort, employers will commit to pay an average monthly salary of \$4,900/\$5,500 and offer a monthly tuition fee subsidy of \$1,100/\$2,500 to student-workers over the 18-month (for FD programme)/30-month (for HD programme) study-cum-work period respectively. Upon completion of the programme, a FD graduate may earn not less than \$11,000 a month and a HD graduate may earn up to \$13,000 if they stay on with the employers and become full-time employees.



2.29 The Pilot Scheme and the Retail Earn & Learn Pilot Scheme mentioned above are collectively known as the “Earn and Learn Pilot Scheme” in VTC.

Traineeship Scheme

2.30 VTC also launched the traineeship scheme at end 2011 which applies the mode of training-cum-work to the services industries, with the beauty care and hairdressing industries as the starting point. This traineeship scheme targets young people who are 15 years old or above and provides them with structured on-the-job training and vocational education. In a review conducted by VTC at end 2013, trainees and employers generally expressed satisfaction with the scheme. In view of this and the manpower shortage in the retail and the elderly care services industries, VTC has extended the traineeship scheme to these two industries in 2014. This provides youngsters with more training opportunities and helps meet the manpower requirements of these industries.

Industrial Attachment (“IA”)

2.31 With the evidence that IA could provide a real-life organisational context for students to develop specific or generic skills and effectively enhance their employability after graduation, starting from the 2014/15 academic year, the government has allocated recurrent funding of about \$18 million to VTC to provide IA opportunities for about 9 000 students every year mainly studying HD programmes and certain Diploma in Vocational Education programmes.

Campus Development Plan of VTC

2.32 VTC has been invited to draw up a strategic development plan for its campuses to foster synergy and provide state-of-the-art facilities pivotal to enhancing the image and quality of vocational education. In this connection, VTC has set up a steering committee in July 2014 and the government will consider the strategic campus development plan to be submitted by VTC in due course.

Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (“SSSDP”)

2.33 As one of the 2014 Policy Address initiatives, the government will launch the SSSDP starting from the 2015/16 academic year to subsidise about 1 000 students per cohort to pursue designated full-time locally-accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines, with a view to nurturing talents to meet the manpower demand in Hong Kong. The SSSDP will be implemented on a pilot basis for three cohorts of students, and then subject to a review on its effectiveness. In consultation with all bureaux in the government, a total of 13 programmes with 940 subsidised places under six disciplines are covered under the SSSDP for the 2015/16 cohort –

Table 2.4 Disciplines covered under the SSSDP

Discipline	Number of Subsidised Places
Architecture and engineering	170
Creative industry	200
Health care	420
Logistics	70
Testing and certification	50
Tourism and hospitality	30
Total	940

2.34 The programmes selected have a high level of vocational/professional content. The unit subsidy for students will be administered by a two-tier arrangement in which a subsidy of up to \$40,000 per year is provided to programmes which are not laboratory-based while a higher subsidy of up to \$70,000 per year is provided to more costly programmes which are laboratory-based. The actual tuition fee paid by students will be adjusted downwards after deducting the subsidy.

2.35 It is noted that the SSSDP is well-received by bureaux, the relevant industries and the self-financing post-secondary sector. The programmes and number of subsidised places will be subject to annual review by the government taking into account the social and economic development in Hong Kong and the needs of the industries.



Qualifications Framework Fund (“QF Fund”)

2.36 Recognising the importance of QF in maintaining a quality workforce, the CE announced in the 2014 Policy Address to establish a dedicated fund of \$1 billion, namely the QF Fund to provide a steady source of income to support the sustainable development and implementation of QF. The QF Fund was established on 1 September 2014. The QF Fund will further encourage relevant stakeholders to participate in QF, thereby supporting the development of vocational education alongside academic and continuing education.

Career and Life Planning

2.37 Starting from the 2014/15 school year, EDB has provided each public sector school operating classes at senior secondary levels with a recurrent cash grant at about \$500,000 per annum with a view to strengthening the provision of life planning education and career guidance services. Apart from issuing the “Guide on Life Planning Education and Career Guidance for Secondary Schools”, EDB also provides professional support, including enlisting Professional Development Schools to pair up with partner schools for professional sharing; increasing the number of structured training places for teachers; enhancing collaboration with the business sector, tertiary institutions and the QF Secretariat in organising activities for principals, teachers, students and parents; expanding the Business-School Partnership Programme (“BSPP”) to provide more opportunities for career-related experience for students; conducting advisory school visits on life planning education and revamping the career guidance website to provide teachers, students and parents with more information on life planning.

2.38 Since 2005, EDB’s BSPP has been in collaboration with over 170 business entities/organisations in providing students with knowledge of different jobs, and helping them develop positive work attitude and values via talks, workshops, workplace visits and career exploration activities to facilitate their life planning.

2.39 As announced in the 2015 Policy Address, EDB will enhance, reinforce and review BSPP in the three years from the 2015/16 school year. In this connection, EDB will strengthen partnership between schools and business organisations with a view to enhancing students’ understanding of different trades and preparing them for employment in the future through activities such as mentorship, career exploration and business-school pairing programmes, etc. To enhance life planning for students, EDB will review and consolidate key elements of effective practices to facilitate the setting up of a platform to showcase exemplars of business-school partnership, thereby attracting participation of more schools and businesses.

3. Existing Promotion Strategies on Vocational Education

3.1 VET carries the mission of providing a valued choice to the youngsters and working adults to develop interests and acquire appropriate attitude, skills and knowledge in specific trades which would in turn provide the necessary manpower to support the economic development of a society. It is noted that the government, together with different VET providers and organisations, have been deploying various tactics to promote VET and to disseminate information to the community as a whole or specific targets such as secondary school students, their parents and teachers.

3.2 The ensuing paragraphs outline some of the major promotion strategies being adopted by different parties, but they are by no means exhaustive.

Vocational Training Council

3.3 VTC, a major VET provider in Hong Kong, has been actively promoting the value of VET and its multiple study pathways from certificate to degree levels through an integrated promotion strategy.

Community Engagement

3.4 VTC strives to strengthen the engagement with different stakeholders, including parents, school principals, teachers and the general public in the community to further promote the importance of VET. In 2014, about 450 briefing sessions and campus visits for secondary schools were held to help young people gain a comprehensive understanding of VET. VTC also collaborates with the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups to hold a symposium and parent's talk series annually, providing study and career guidance for senior secondary students and parents. The parent's talk series in 2014 attracted 1 000 parents to attend. Career Masters Receptions, which are held twice a year; together with the Principal Forum, recorded the presence of over 450 representatives from secondary schools and non-governmental organisations ("NGOs") in the 2013/14 academic year. VTC also tailored publications for distribution to parents and principals respectively to promote the benefits and value of VET.



Publicity and Promotion

3.5 To increase public awareness and preference toward VET programmes, VTC launches advertising and promotion campaigns annually in various media including TV, newspapers, outdoor platforms, popular websites and social media. In 2015, a new advertising campaign featuring outstanding VTC alumni has been launched to highlight the positive impact and value of VET.

Use of Digital Media

3.6 Leveraging on the popularity of digital media, a multifaced approach is adopted to promote VET. Different introductory videos on VTC's member institutions and programmes have been produced and uploaded to the dedicated VTC's Channel on YouTube. Successful stories of VTC graduates, endorsements from industries and information for parents are also shared in this channel. About 1.5 million video views were recorded at the end of 2014. In addition, a Facebook fan page has been created to engage and connect with the young people. Updated news on VET is disseminated and online campaigns are organised to arouse the interest of young people in VET. To enhance interactivity with different stakeholders, a virtual ambassador, "V Wa", has been created to answer online enquiries and as at January 2015, over 35 000 fans have signed up the VTC fan page.

3.7 An interactive corner was developed in the dedicated parent zone in the VTC website to provide first-hand information to parents. Emails on the latest VET information were disseminated to secondary school students, parents, teachers and career masters. A VTC mobile application tailor-made for secondary school students has also been produced, which includes practical features such as programme information, key dates of admission, event calendar as well as Question & Answer function. Over 20 000 accumulative downloads were recorded as at January 2015.

Skills Competitions

3.8 The WorldSkills Hong Kong Competition 2014¹⁰ and the 8th Guangzhou/Hong Kong/Macao/Chengdu (“GHMC”) Youth Skills Competition¹¹ were held in 2014 to showcase the best talent of the skilled workers and tradesmen, raise the awareness of youth, parents and teachers on the importance of skills training, and to encourage more young people to opt for the vocational education pathway. These competitions provide a platform for young people to excel in their vocational skills, strive for professionalism and make contribution to society. Interactive promotional activities were also organised alongside both competitions to engage the public, particularly the young people and their parents, to understand the importance and learning outcome of VET, and the skill levels and social status of young skilled workers in Hong Kong, including –

- Tryout activities for school students to explore what they like best among various skills and trades;
- Skills demonstrations by experts to inspire young people to choose a skill that they would like to further pursue; and
- Career exhibitions by employers and trade associations to provide youth with information and advice on their career interests.

Attracting over 35 000 visitors, the two mega events successfully promoted skills excellence and enhanced community awareness of VET.

¹⁰ The WorldSkills Hong Kong Competition is a biennial event which VTC, CIC and CITA jointly organise. The last Competition was held on 27 and 28 June 2014 to select the best local candidates and get them prepared to compete for Hong Kong in the WorldSkills Competition, a biennial international and the largest vocational skills competition for young people with 46 skills categories ranging from creative arts and fashion to manufacturing and engineering technology.

¹¹ The GHMC Youth Skills Competition is a biennial regional event held among the four member cities (Guangzhou/Hong Kong/Macao/Chengdu) on a rotational basis. In 2014, VTC hosted the competition on behalf of Hong Kong on 31 October and 1 November.

Apprenticeship and Traineeship Scheme

3.9 Through social media, seminars and different activities, VTC is actively promoting its apprenticeship scheme to attract young people to work in various industries. Industry partners and organisations are invited from time to time to introduce and demonstrate industry-related professional skills to secondary school students in order to engage them in practical interactive experience. To effectively promote the apprenticeship scheme, VTC organises the Outstanding Apprentice/Trainee Award annually, in which awardees are interviewed by the public media. Sharing sessions are also held, in which awardees can share their experience as apprentices/trainees.

3.10 Separately, VTC has launched the Earn and Learn Pilot Scheme in the 2014/15 academic year by integrating structured apprenticeship training programmes and clear career progression pathways, as well as the traineeship scheme as detailed under paragraphs 2.21 to 2.30 above.

Employees Retraining Board

3.11 As detailed in paragraph 2.12 above, ERB provides training and retraining courses and services to eligible employees aged 15 or above with education attainment at sub-degree level or below. As at January 2015, ERB offers about 800 training courses straddling 28 industries. Young people who meet the relevant entry requirements are eligible to enroll in training courses that match their career aspirations and training needs. In addition, ERB provides vocational skills training and placement follow-up services to young people through dedicated training programmes, including the Youth Training Programme, the Youth Management Trainee Programme and the “Squad 3S” Training Programme. To assist young people aged 15 to 24 to gain a better understanding of the employment market and formulate their career plans, ERB introduced the May for Youth Programme in May 2014.

3.12 Since the 2013-14 financial year, ERB has been organising career talks for students of secondary schools and educational institutions offering sub-degree programmes to introduce the characteristics of the employment market in general and the customs, entry requirements and career pathways of different industries.

Construction Industry Council

3.13 To cope with the manpower demand of the construction industry, the Development Bureau (“DEVB”) has obtained a total of \$320 million from the Legislative Council in 2010 and 2012 to support CIC to strengthen its role in training local construction personnel and enhance promotion and publicity activities to attract more people to join the industry. With this funding support, CIC launched the “Enhanced Construction Manpower Training Scheme” with higher training allowance for training semi-skilled workers, targeting trades with projected labour shortage, acute ageing or recruitment difficulties. Up to end 2014, there were more than 6 000 graduates who have graduated from the enhanced scheme. Further, CIC launched the “Enhanced Construction Supervisor/Technician Training Scheme” for training supervisors/technicians, and provided subsidies for fees of trade tests, specified training courses and skill enhancement courses to enhance the skill levels of in-service construction workers, and advanced training courses for senior construction workers.

3.14 To diversify the training modes and increase the training places for construction workers, CIC launched the Contractors Cooperative Training Scheme (“CCTS”) in collaboration with contractors. Under the CCTS, contractors hire trainees and provide them with relevant training on construction sites. Training allowances and other training expenses are provided by CIC to the participating trainees and contractors. Besides, CIC also launched other collaborative training schemes with relevant industry stakeholders to increase the training capacity.

3.15 CIC plans to kick-start new training measures to upgrade the skills of semi-skilled workers to the level of skilled workers in the coming years with a view to enhancing the supply of skilled workers to meet the needs of the industry. In the 2015 Policy Address, the government announced to provide \$100 million for CIC to strengthen their work to train skilled workers for the industry. Continuous efforts will be made to enhance the professional development of construction workers and personnel and provide them with additional progression pathways.



3.16 Besides, in order to uplift the image of the construction industry and attract more new bloods to join the industry, DEVB collaborated with CIC to launch the “Build Up Publicity Campaign” in 2011. Major initiatives include broadcasting the documentary and TV dramas “Dreams come True” (總有出頭天), setting up a dedicated website, introducing the Build Up Ambassador, launching advertisements through various channels such as giant billboard, outdoor banners, MTR light box, bus body, newspapers, etc. to reach out to the target audiences. Besides, CIC has been taking forward various initiatives including organising roving exhibitions, school talks and visits, etc. to attract more people to join the industry and enhance their skills. Since the launch of the campaign, more young people are willing to join the construction industry.

Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

3.17 The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (“EMSD”) and 17 organisations¹² have set up a Working Group for the Promotion of Electrical and Mechanical Industry in Hong Kong in 2012. In June 2014, the Working Group promoted vocational education and apprenticeships in the E&M trade through the WorldSkills Competition cum Construction Industry Mega Fun Day co-organised by VTC and CIC. In addition, EMSD jointly promoted the E&M trade with the Working Group in the EMSD Open Day in November 2014 through exhibition booth and guided tour to the EMSD Headquarters, which attracted over 5 000 visitors including secondary school students and public members. Organised by EMSD, the promotion booths on E&M trade in the E&M Safety Carnival held in December 2014 also attracted over 1 000 visitors. Apart from the above, the Working Group has launched its dedicated website, Facebook page and mobile application to enhance public knowledge about the E&M industry and to encourage more young people to join E&M services-related apprentice training.

¹² The organisations include MTR Corporation Limited, CLP Power Hong Kong Limited, Hongkong Electric Company Limited, Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited, Water Supplies Department, VTC's Office of the Director of Apprenticeship, CIC, The Institute of the Motor Industry Hong Kong, seven E&M contractors' associations, The Federation of Hong Kong E&M Industries Trade Unions and EMSD Apprentice Association.

3.18 The Working Group extended its promotion channels through the broadcasting of a nine-episode TV series named “Engineering, Life and Dream” (機電夢飛翔) from January to March 2014 (with its re-broadcasting in January 2015), which was jointly produced by Radio Television Hong Kong and EMSD. The broadcast was supplemented by activities such as roadshows, career talks to youths, newspaper supplements, and a Launching cum E&M Trade Information Activity Day in January 2014. Subsequently, an online quiz competition about the TV series was organised and has attracted over 5 000 participants. To further promote E&M apprenticeship and careers in the E&M trade, EMSD delivered a talk about “Bright Future in Engineering” in the Education and Career Expo held in February 2015, and the Working Group organised a two-day “E&M Trades Expo – Life Planning” at the VTC Kwai Chung Complex which also attracted around 3 000 visitors in March 2015.

3.19 These channels provided a useful platform for the promotion of the industry in recruiting apprentices. In 2013 and 2014, the recruitment exercise achieved satisfactory results, with a significant increase in the number of applications received from around 600 in 2012 to over 2 400 and 2 900 applications in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

3.20 In addition, EMSD has renamed its “apprentice” as “technician trainee” since the 2012 recruitment exercise with a view to making its apprentice training more attractive to young people. Starting from the 2013 recruitment exercise, EMSD has introduced a four-year training programme targeting graduates of the New Senior Secondary academic structure as well as enhanced the remuneration package to attract more young people to join the industry. In 2014, a total of 168 technician trainees were recruited.

Education Bureau

3.21 The Career Guidance Section (“CGS”) (or former Career Guidance Team (“CGT”)) under EDB provides professional support for schools with a view to enhancing their capacity in delivering life planning education and career guidance services to students, and strengthening collaboration between schools and business entities/organisations through BSPP for the benefits of students’ whole-person development and transition from school to work.



3.22 Through organising career information expo and career guidance seminars cum sharing sessions, updating its website on news about career information and publishing career guidance handbook, CGS provides support to secondary students in making choice for appropriate career and education programmes. In the 2013/14 school year, 15 career guidance seminars cum sharing sessions for students were organised. Moreover, the “Career Information Series 2013-14” was jointly organised with the QF Secretariat which aimed to enable students, teachers and parents to understand the role of QF in the career planning of secondary students as well as the resources provided by CGS. A career information seminar and 19 career talks were held with the support of industries with ITACs set up under QF. The seminar and career talks enabled secondary students to understand the background of different industries, the development and progression pathways, and how QF can facilitate their planning of further study and careers.

3.23 In order to help secondary students to understand the operation, market needs, and the skills and attitude required in different industries, CGS and the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters jointly organised the annual “Summer Career-related Experience Scheme” to encourage students to make preparation for planning their future careers. In the summer of the 2013/14 school year, arrangements were made for 154 students to work in 10 different organisations for a duration of two to eight weeks to benefit from workplace experiences.

3.24 To empower teachers and equip them with the professional knowledge, the number of structured training places has been increased from 80 to 240 starting from the 2014/15 school year. Other than the structured training, workshops, seminars cum sharing sessions were held regularly for teachers.

3.25 Pursuant to the 2014 Policy Address, EDB has implemented various measures to help young people with life planning –

- (a) EDB has provided schools operating senior secondary education levels with a recurrent grant with effect from the 2014/15 school year to expand the capacity of schools and their responsible teachers so as to enable them to enhance support services for senior secondary students in respect of life planning, articulation through multiple pathways and realisation of personal goals/aspirations;

- (b) EDB expanded CGT to form CGS to strengthen professional support services to schools to take forward a paradigm shift towards life planning education in a more co-ordinated and systematic manner. CGS would conduct advisory visits to schools, organise professional development programmes/sharing sessions for teachers, promote career-related learning/experiences beyond the classroom and enhance parents' awareness of the multiple pathways for their children; and
- (c) EDB would encourage greater participation of business entities/organisations in BSPP, which aims to provide a better learning environment for students to understand different industries, establish positive work attitude, adapt to changes of the economy and ultimately achieve whole-person development through better co-operation and closer alliances between the business sector and schools.

3.26 Apart from the above, EDB organised the annual Information Expo on Multiple Pathways. There were over 30 participating institutions and organisations in 2014, which provided information on locally-accredited post-secondary programmes including VET programmes. Seminars on topics such as multiple pathways for secondary school graduates, preparation for articulation to post-secondary education, and experience sharing with students of post-secondary programmes were held.

3.27 Besides, the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education which was set up in April 2012 to advise the Secretary for Education on the development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector, organised the “Seminar on Closer Alignment between Post-secondary Education Institutions and Industries” on 30 October 2013. The seminar aimed to serve as a catalyst to promote exchanges between industries and the education and training providers, with a view to integrating education, training, business and employment seamlessly. Industry representatives from the logistics, banking, retail and engineering industries and relevant course operators were invited to share their views on how to foster closer alignment between industries and institutions, so that post-secondary education could more effectively meet the needs of employers and contribute to the economic development of Hong Kong. To sustain the momentum, it is noted that follow-up actions such as stock-taking of the current situation through a questionnaire survey for

post-secondary institutions, focus group meetings with post-secondary graduates, sharing of good practices by post-secondary institutions, conduct of industry-specific survey on opinions of employers on performance of post-secondary graduates, etc. are being or will be taken.

Qualifications Framework

3.28 Since the launch of QF in 2008 which aims to encourage lifelong learning, 19 ITACs have been set up for 20 industries/sector¹³ as at 1 January 2015, covering about 52% of the local workforce in Hong Kong. ITACs have been playing an important role in promoting QF in the respective industries, drawing up SCSs, formulating clear progression pathways and providing career information to students through various channels.

3.29 EDB and the QF Secretariat have continuously organised various promotional and publicity activities with a view to increasing awareness of QF amongst stakeholders and the public at large. The range of activities held mainly included talks, seminars, visits, forums, road shows, publications and feature articles. A number of marketing campaigns were also organised to promote QF to the general public. They included the broadcast of Announcement in Public Interest (“API”) on TV and radio channels, advertising on bus bodies, video competition for secondary school students and media interviews.

3.30 Besides, the Financial Secretary announced in the 2013-14 Budget to allocate \$10 million per year from the 2013-14 financial year onwards to support ITACs to launch new initiatives to further enhance the knowledge and skills of practitioners in the industries and their competitiveness in the labour market. The Award Scheme for Learning Experiences is one of the initiatives, which aims to encourage outstanding or emerging practitioners to engage in learning activities in different places around the world with a view to broadening their horizons and developing network with industry partners in and outside Hong Kong. These awardees serve as exemplars and role models for their respective industries and help

¹³ Printing & Publishing, Watch & Clock, Catering, Property Management, Electrical & Mechanical Services, Jewellery, Information & Communications Technology, Automotive, Logistics, Banking, Import & Export, Testing, Inspection & Certification, Retail, Insurance, Manufacturing Technology (Tooling, Metals and Plastics), Elderly Care Service, Security Services, Human Resource Management, Beauty and Hairdressing. It is worth noting that starting from 1 January 2015, the Beauty ITAC and Hairdressing ITAC have merged to become the Beauty & Hairdressing ITAC to create synergy; and the Chinese Catering ITAC has extended its ambit to cover the whole catering industry and is renamed as the Catering ITAC.



attract the younger generation to pursue career in these fields and promote "multiple pathways; masters of each trade". The awardees are also invited to share their learning experiences in different QF-related functions.

3.31 In addition, riding on the ITAC networks and the competency standards and progression pathways developed for the respective industries, pilot projects with five ITACs¹⁴ were organised to promote QF and industries to senior secondary school students. Over 200 students attended the talks, workshops or visits in 2014 and early 2015. Separately, as mentioned in paragraph 3.22 above, the "Career Information Series 2013-14" was jointly organised with CGS which aimed to enable students, teachers and parents to understand the role of QF in the career planning of secondary students as well as the resources provided by CGS. Over 1 000 teachers and students attended. All these efforts aim at enabling teachers, students, parents and the community at large to understand how QF can facilitate students' planning of further study and careers.

Other Promotion Strategies

3.32 Apart from the above, there are training providers and organisations which have strived to promote VET with a view to nurturing the talent to support different industries. Some other schemes are also in place which can achieve the effect of promoting VET as a side product. For example, in order to cope with the pressing demand for care personnel in the social welfare sector and to provide the younger generation with more employment options and a foundation for career development in care services, the government introduced a "first-hire-then-train" pilot scheme through the Lotteries Fund in 2014.

3.33 Under the pilot scheme, young people are recruited to provide care services at residential care homes for the elderly and are provided with subsidies to pursue a two-year part-time course offered by the Open University of Hong Kong. After completing the course, they could be promoted to a higher position and pursue further career development in care services. As the youth's response to the pilot scheme is positive, the government will allocate additional resources to expand the pilot scheme and to include rehabilitation services under the name "Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services". The Navigation Scheme will provide an

¹⁴ They are Elderly Care Services; Beauty; Information & Communications Technology; Printing & Publishing; and Hairdressing ITACs.



additional 1 000 places for young people who graduate at Secondary 5 or Secondary 6 level in the coming few years.

3.34 Besides, a \$100 million Maritime and Aviation Training Fund (“MATF”) was launched in April 2014 to support manpower development for the maritime and aviation sectors. MATF would be used over a period of five years from the 2014-15 to 2018-19 financial years to enhance existing training schemes and scholarships as well as to introduce new initiatives. Among all, the Professional Training and Examination Refund Scheme has been introduced to upgrade the professionalism of qualified in-service practitioners by refunding 80% of fees to personnel after their passing/completion of approved examinations/courses. In addition, part of the MATF is used to increase the monthly subsidy (i.e. from \$5,000 to \$6,000) provided for cadets under the existing Sea-going Training Incentive Scheme.

4. Experience in Vocational Education Outside Hong Kong

4.1 The experience in promoting VET outside Hong Kong would serve as a useful reference. The ensuing paragraphs set out the practices of places outside Hong Kong on development and promotion of VET, which the Task Force has made reference to.

Germany¹⁵

The Dual System

4.2 Germany has had a long history of VET and is well-known for its “dual system”, so named because learning occurs in both a workplace and vocational schools. Lower secondary education in Germany focuses primarily on general education, while in upper secondary education, vocational education programmes come to the fore in addition to the grammar-school educational programme. The upper secondary programmes lead either to the qualifications required for entrance to higher education, entitling students to enter institutions of higher education, or to vocational qualifications, enabling those so qualified to enter employment as a qualified skilled worker.

4.3 The dual system is an integration of classroom learning (1 - 2 days per week) and part-time working in the training company (3 - 4 days per week). The former provides students with theoretical foundations while the latter provides practical work experiences. The dual system lasts for two to three-and-a-half years, and currently offers about 330 state-recognised occupations, which are revised and updated when considered necessary by social partners. About 21% of companies in Germany are offering apprenticeship training, with a clear perspective to developing employees directly in line with the company’s skilled labour force requirement, securing the future workbase and enhancing the company’s reputation.

¹⁵ Sources: The Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany; the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry; Destatis, Germany; the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Germany; and German Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong

Company-driven

4.4 The dual system highly serves the companies' need for skilled workers as the companies in Germany could determine the content of the above-mentioned 330 state-recognised occupations. The companies do not consider the costs of training up apprentices as costs but as an investment that pays off to them in terms of productivity and competitiveness. At the same time, the companies are enabled to be that much involved as they are strongly supported by chambers and employer associations.

Close Partnership among Stakeholders

4.5 The main feature behind the German VET system is the close partnership among employers, chambers and the government. In Germany, all companies are required to join a chamber by law and these company members need to pay mandatory subscription, which is calculated based on the companies' income. The chambers are accountable to the government on VET implementation. In particular, German chambers and professional organisations are heavily engaged in setting VET examinations and establishing VET programmes with vocational schools.

4.6 With the above, the labour market factors are remarkably well integrated into the system of vocational schools. The qualifications offered are highly recognised by the employers, who have an in-depth understanding of the content of VET programmes and the expected graduate profile. Besides, continuing education is equally valued by employers so that more than half of the German enterprises financially contribute to continuing training activities to develop the skills of their employees.

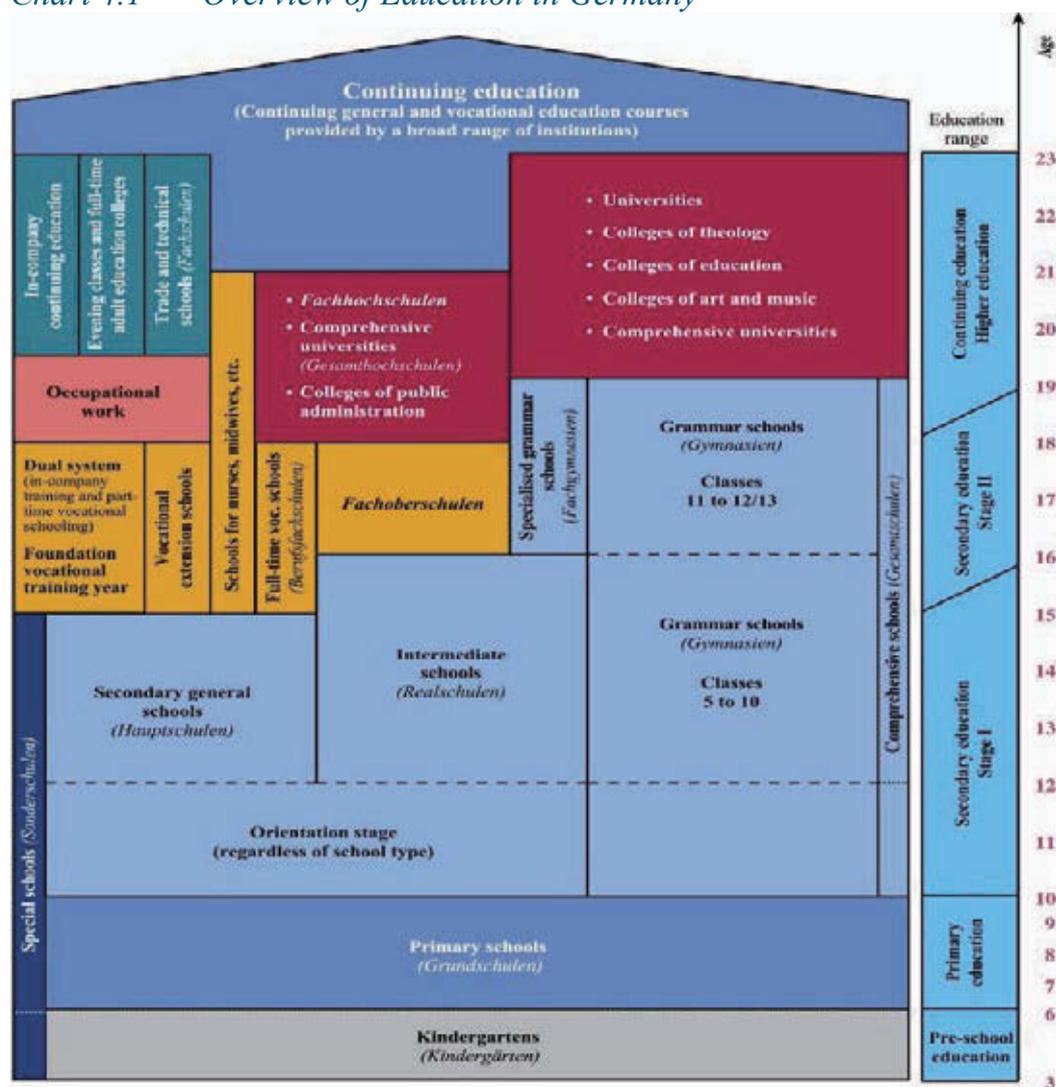
4.7 In general, apprentices are paid one-third of the starting pay of a trained skilled worker and the payment increases with each training year. After completing their training in the dual system, the majority of participants then take up employment as a skilled worker. More than half of the 18 to 24 year old with a degree in the dual system continue working in their training occupation. 32% are working in an occupation that is related to their training. Later on, many of them make use of the opportunities of continuing vocational training.

4.8 Under certain conditions, those who have qualified may obtain the academic standard required for entrance to a Fachhochschule (i.e. the University of Applied Science) in one year at school full-time. Fachhochschule is a German type of

tertiary education institution, which is usually specialised in certain topical areas (e.g. engineering, technology or business) and could legally award bachelor's and master's degree. The course structure and way of teaching in a Fachhochschule is characterised by an emphasis on application and occupational practice.

4.9 In 2005, Germany underwent a major VET reform, allowing trainees to spend parts of their apprenticeship programme abroad and issuing trilingual certificates (German, French and English) to facilitate graduates to work in other European countries. Financed by the State, an initiative was also implemented to help gather small and medium enterprises (“SMEs”), which cannot provide training on their own, to share trainees. Another possibility for SMEs that cannot provide all the training are inter-company training centers, organised and run by the chambers, with financial support of the federal state.

Chart 4.1 Overview of Education in Germany



4.10 In the past, about 60% of a cohort chose to embark upon VET. However, there is an undersupply of VET students in recent years due to a lower birth rate and higher tendency for young people to attend university. The proportion of school leavers opting for the vocational route has now dropped to 55.7%, and the rest continue to pursue general education.

Career Guidance and Promotion

4.11 Schools are responsible for incorporating elements of vocational orientation in the curriculum of secondary education, which is supplemented by work visits, and by work experiences between one to three weeks in Year 9 and 10 (i.e. at the age of 14 to 16).

4.12 The Federal Employment Service provides information, guidance and placement services relating to post-school career option. Career counsellors from the Service will visit schools once every month or two and conduct career counselling interviews with individual students. Students are also taken to the Service's career information centre to familiarise themselves with the facilities and services, and they may revisit the centre for career services when needed. A wide variety of web-based resources such as "virtual tours of firms" are available to students to learn more about apprenticeship occupations.

4.13 In order to attract young people to join VET, the German government has launched a National Campaign on VET in 2008 that includes information tours across Germany, poster campaigns, target group oriented website and social media campaign.

Switzerland¹⁶

VET and Professional Education and Training ("PET")

4.14 The dual system is also found in Switzerland, where the VET system is very large and delivers very high level of skills to an exporting economy that depends upon science, technology, innovation and quality goods and services. The education system in Switzerland emphasises permeability whereby people can attend different levels of education and training according to their interest and need during their lives. VET is considered as a very good basis for entry into the labour market and lifelong learning.

¹⁶ Source: State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, Switzerland

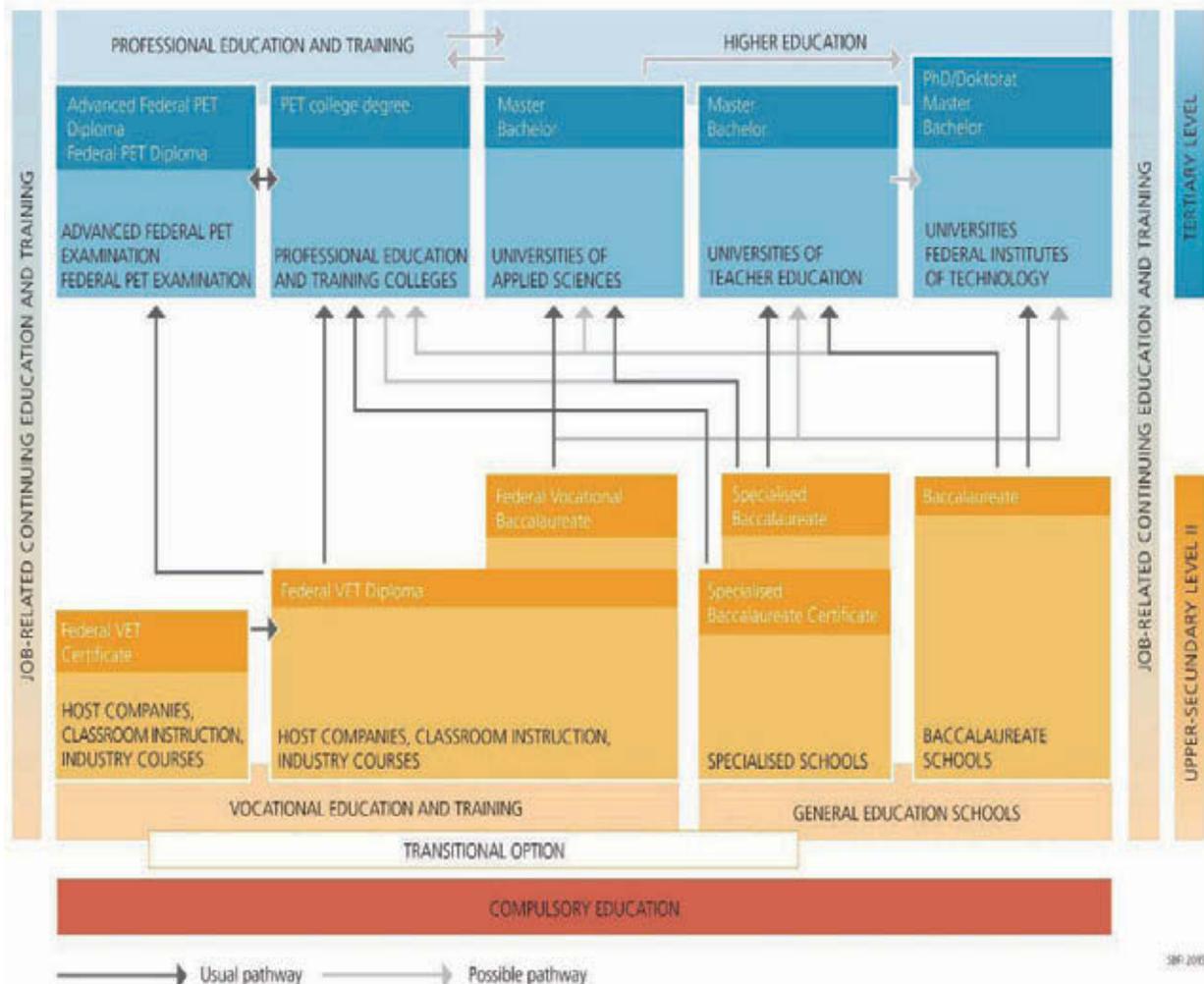


4.15 The VET system has effective pathways from initial VET to PET. In Switzerland, about two-thirds of adolescents choose to enter VET after nine years of compulsory education and the following programmes are available –

- (a) 2-year VET leading to Federal VET Certificate, intended for students with lower academic learning performance and more practical skills;
- (b) 3 to 4-year VET leading to Federal VET Diploma; and
- (c) Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (“FVB”), which is an extended general education to supplement the 3 to 4-year VET and is for students with higher learning performance. There is flexibility in learning structure and mode of study, for example, it can be completed during the 3 to 4-year VET with additional instruction in general education subjects, or after VET by attending classes at a corresponding institution (in either full-time or part-time mode). FVB holders are entitled to enroll in any of Switzerland’s universities of applied sciences or obtain an additional qualification needed to enroll in a cantonal university or a federal institute of technology in Switzerland.

4.16 PET is further education and training that prepares one to assume demanding roles and responsibilities in a technical specialist and/or managerial position. In Switzerland, a PET qualification is a degree at tertiary level equivalent to a university degree, which is awarded through a federal examination or by a PET college. Similar to the dual system, it builds from work experience and combines classroom study with the practical know-how gained in the workplace. The practical side of the dual approach is covered by the fact that students preparing for the federal exams or attending a PET college keep on working part-time in their company.

Chart 4.2 Overview of Education in Switzerland



Career Guidance and Promotion

4.17 In Switzerland, career guidance to help young people make an occupational choice is the responsibility of school teaching staff and could begin in the sixth year of schooling (12 years old). In the sixth year, students learn about the businesses and economic life of the area in which they live, and find out and discuss at school the jobs that their parents do and how their parents came to choose their occupation. In the eighth and ninth years, career guidance session is included in the compulsory education that students will visit careers centres which provide an



independent professional career service for individual counselling. There are tools for assessing students' talent and abilities for career advice.

4.18 In the final year of the 9-year compulsory education, students are offered with aptitude tests, classes on writing application letters for apprenticeship positions together with other activities to help the student arrive at an occupational choice and to find an appropriate apprenticeship place.

4.19 Separately, promotion could be done in the form of recruitment. In Switzerland, the recruitment procedure in some training companies begins more than a year before the training commences, starting with an information day providing information on the training programme and the companies. Some of them may also offer work experience days before the formal training. Such a high-profile and experiential recruitment process could raise the awareness of VET in the community and allow trainees to make an informed decision before being admitted to an apprenticeship.

United Kingdom¹⁷

Delivery of VET

4.20 In all four places that make up the United Kingdom (“UK”) (i.e. England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland), skills are delivered through a range of organisations. These include –

- **Schools:** Deliver a range of core skills and vocational courses, particularly for learners aged 14 to 18.
- **Further Education Colleges:** These institutions are at the heart of the VET sector in the UK. They deliver various kinds of skills to learners from the age of 14.
- **Universities:** Alongside academic and higher-level vocational and technical skills, universities also deliver core skills and some have a focus on enterprise and employability. Learners usually start their university education from the age of 18.

¹⁷ Source: The British Council in Hong Kong

- **Private Training Providers:** They deliver a range of skills but usually with a focus on the vocationally specific elements. They often deliver employability skills through this focus and offer courses for learners over the age of 16.
- **Employers:** Many employers now provide on and off the job training opportunities, often through apprenticeships. Training is normally directly related to the job role and the needs of the organisation.

Qualifications frameworks support this progression, so that both vocational and academic qualifications can be seen as of equivalent value.

4.21 It is worth noting that the 16 to 19 Study Programmes were introduced in England starting from September 2013. All students aged 16 to 19 in full or part-time education in England are now expected to follow a study programme tailored to their individual needs, education and employment goals. The Programmes incorporate high quality, substantial qualifications and purposeful work experience. “Substantial qualifications” will be of sufficient size, weight and relevance and provide a recognised route into a trade, profession or form of employment, or to higher education. A-levels (“General Certificate of Education Advanced Level” – a school leaving academic qualification taken by 16-19 year olds) and/or substantial vocational qualifications will make up the majority of the study programme time. A critical objective of the 16-19 Study Programmes is that they will not only result in robust learning programmes for learners, but will also help to build parity of esteem between academic and vocational provision by recognising both as potential routes to higher education.

4.22 Also in England, Career Colleges are being introduced, designed to increase the range and choice of opportunities open to 14-19 year olds. They provide accelerated, vocationally focused programmes of study at colleges equipped to the highest standards staffed by expert teachers and supported by employers.

4.23 Scotland is currently undergoing substantial structural and policy reform of VET provision as part of the reform of post 16 Education. This is underpinned by an approach that sees vocational learning as part of a holistic spectrum of skills, reflecting the wider philosophy underpinning the curriculum in Scotland, “Curriculum for Excellence”.

Involvement of Employers

4.24 The UK has a long history of involving employers in the design and delivery of its skills systems. Among other things, a key way in which employers have been given increasing ownership of VET in England is through the trailblazer apprenticeships. Large employers are being encouraged to get together to develop high-level standards of apprenticeship training to replace some of the very detailed standards that have been seen to inhibit progress.

4.25 A new vehicle has also been introduced for delivering apprenticeships – the Apprenticeship Training Agency (“ATA”). This scheme seeks to address the issue that SMEs often find it difficult to support the employment of an apprentice on their own. In this scheme – run mainly by Further Education Colleges – the ATA itself becomes the employer and it allows for apprentices to be shared between SMEs.

4.26 In Scotland the Modern Apprenticeships Scheme offers people aged 16 and over the opportunity to develop their workplace skills and experience, and gain a qualification while in paid employment. There are around 70 types of modern apprenticeships available across a range of occupations including accounting, plumbing, hospitality and engineering and across four levels (2, 3, 4 and 5) which represent the level of Scottish Vocational Qualification that apprentices can achieve. Most combine on-the-job training by employers and classroom-based learning delivered by a training provider such as a college.

Promotion of VET

4.27 Organisations such as the Edge Foundation and the Skills Show promote the value of VET by celebrating success and showcasing talent and economic contribution of VET students and graduates. The Edge Foundation is an independent education foundation, dedicated to raising the status of practical, technical and vocational learning. As part of this work, the Edge Foundation has created “VQ day”, which is a day of nationwide celebration of vocational qualifications. First launched in 2008, VQ day sees national celebration events and award ceremonies take place in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. There are also regional and local events organised by colleges and training providers, such as “Have a go” events to introduce young people to careers they may not have previously considered by



allowing them to try out different skills. As for the Skills Show, it is the nation's largest skills and careers event, attracting over 73 000 visitors, showcasing skills, and hosting the UK Skills Competitions – finding the national champions that will be put forward in the WorldSkills International Competition.

Careers Advice and Guidance

4.28 In England, 14-16 year olds obtain careers advice and guidance independent from their school, so that they can understand the best available route to their personal needs unbiased by their school's priorities.

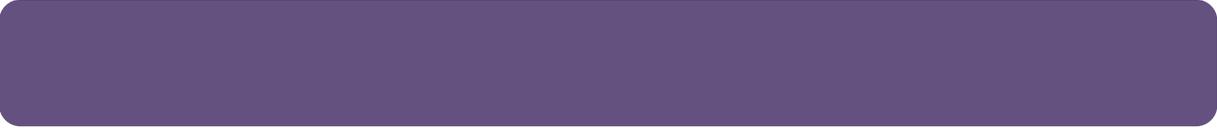
4.29 Careers advice in Scotland is currently undergoing review. The review follows the publication of the policy paper “Career Information, Advice and Guidance in Scotland: A Framework for Service Redesign and Improvement” in March 2011. The paper highlights the Scottish Government commitment to an all-age universal Careers Information Advice and Guidance Service. At present, as part of the 16+ Learning Choices, schools are required to provide a service that involves pathway discussions from the age of 14 including VET options.

Australia¹⁸

VET in Schools

4.30 In Australia, VET programmes can only be offered by Registered Training Organisations (“RTOs”). These include Technical and Further Education (“TAFE”) institutes and private colleges. Some universities may also offer VET courses in addition to higher education courses. VET is available for students at senior secondary schools that are also RTOs or through arrangements made by the schools with an RTO. In Australia, Vocational Education and Training in Schools (“VETiS”) is a key component of the government's strategy to address skill shortages by providing different options to students, who could undertake VET at school as part of their school studies by enrolling in a course offered by an RTO or as a school-based apprentice or trainee. VETiS comprises accredited and nationally recognised VET certificate programmes, which could contribute towards the completion of a senior secondary certificate and the qualification attained can be used for advanced standing in other appropriate VET courses.

¹⁸ Sources: The Department of Education and Training, Australia; Australian Qualifications Framework; and Australian Apprenticeships, Australian Government



4.31 In addition, there are popular TAFE institutes providing Diploma and Advanced Diploma programmes covering a wide range of study disciplines. There is also apprenticeship that leads to Certificate III pegged to the Australian Qualifications Framework (“AQF”). The Australian government and state governments provide different incentives for individuals and companies to encourage participation and completion in the on-the-job VET, such as living away from home subsidy, completion bonus and payroll tax exemptions. Apprentices are paid between 40% to 60% of the minimum wage in the early years of training, and receive at least the minimum wage or 80% to 95% of the skilled worker’s rate at the final year of training. An employee can only be paid apprentice and trainee pay rates if they have a formal training contract with their employer. The training has to be registered and recognised by a state or territory training authority. These employees must undertake training with a RTO. In general, an adult apprentice (aged 21 or above) can usually be paid at a higher rate in Australia.

4.32 In Australia, there is a National Skills Needs List (“NSNL”) which identifies the traditional trades that are experiencing national skills shortage. NSNL is based on detailed labour market research and analysis undertaken by the Department of Employment and is reviewed regularly. The updated NSNL as at July 2014 contains some 60 trades, ranging from plumber to electrician to telecommunications technician, etc.

Career Guidance and Promotion

4.33 Instead of personal counselling service, online sources such as websites are widely used by the public to access information on VET in Australia. Examples include the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Information Service which provides apprenticeships and traineeships information and resources about RTOs, Australian Apprenticeships Pathways which provide the job pathway charts of different industries in accordance with AQF and “myFuture”, an online career information and exploration service for students and parents to explore different occupations. Furthermore, there are one-stop centres, namely Australian Apprenticeships Centres, at local areas responsible for marketing and promoting VET, administering incentive payments to employers and individuals, and providing advice and support to all involved in VET.

Singapore¹⁹

4.34 Singapore relies heavily on an educated and skilled workforce, and through institutional training provides entry-level training in skilled occupations to young people. Its VET system has a clear separation between initial and continuing education and training. While the initial VET is designed to provide the necessary skills and knowledge for employment, and is delivered by polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education (“ITE”), workers can continue to upgrade their skills or learn new skills through continuing education and training programmes organised by the polytechnics, ITE and the Workforce Development Agency. After 10 years of general education, students may enter one of the following VET programmes offered by the polytechnics and ITE –

- 2-year National ITE Certificate;
- 2-year Higher National ITE Certificate; or
- 3-year Diploma courses.

4.35 Separately, ITE also facilitates industry-based training to complement training conducted at VET institutions. ITE’s industry-based training schemes include –

(a) Traineeship

- Training at the workplace begins at the beginning of the 2-year course; and
- Trainees earn SGD 800 to 1,000 per month (i.e. about HK\$4,800 to 6,000), 50% of which is subsidised by the government.

(b) Approved Training Centre Scheme

- The Scheme allows employers, whose companies have been certified by ITE as Approved Training Centres, to train their employees in-house. Employees who pass the course are awarded ITE certifications.

¹⁹ Source: The Institute of Technical Education, Singapore

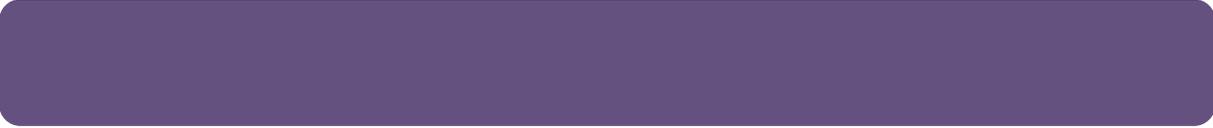
(c) Certified On-the-Job Training Centre Scheme

- Companies are encouraged to set up an in-house, On-the-Job Training (“OJT”) system to train their employees. ITE assists these companies in the setting up of the system, and, if they fulfill the criteria, certify them as Certified OJT Centres of ITE. For these companies, the training programmes are developed by the companies.
- Employees obtain certificates issued by the companies and these qualifications are recognised for entry into ITE courses.

4.36 The Singapore government has provided land and invested in the transformation of VET by consolidating and converting 10 ITE campuses to three mega campuses with state-of-the-art facilities to enhance the quality of vocational education. The campuses have over 70% purpose-built laboratories and workshops for simulated real-world hands-on and practical training.

4.37 For the past years, Singapore has achieved a relatively high Gross Domestic Product growth. Sustained growth has created considerable demand for skilled workers in the various sectors. Concurrently, manpower is required for supporting its high-technology manufacturing and services industries. Therefore, the government’s education and training policy, which was initially focused on school and higher education sectors, has been shifting to focus on VET and continued up-skilling of the local people.

4.38 It is worth noting that the Applied Study at Polytechnics and ITE Review Committee in Singapore published a report in August 2014 with recommendations on increasing the practical relevance of skills training in polytechnics and ITE to the working world to prepare its young people for the changing needs of society. The report can be assessed at <http://www.moe.gov.sg/aspire/report/report-for-aspire/index.html>. Separately, one of the key areas highlighted in the 2015 Budget of Singapore is to “*empower every individual to learn and develop throughout life*” to support continued economic growth. Amongst other initiatives, the SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme will be introduced from 2015. Fresh graduates from polytechnics and ITE will be matched with suitable employers. They will start working and undergo structured on-the-job



training and mentorship, while they study for an industry-recognised qualification. Both trainees and employers who sign up for this programme will receive support from the government. This will be done in a phased way, eventually covering up to one in three polytechnic and ITE graduates.

Career Guidance and Promotion

4.39 Education and Career Guidance will also be enhanced in the secondary schools to create a greater awareness of the courses offered by the polytechnics and ITE, and careers in the related industry. This will help the students make informed course choices at the end of secondary schools.

China²⁰

4.40 Chinese vocational education system underwent a process of adjustment and rapid development over the past few decades. In the past, Chinese parents shared the entrenched bias against vocational education and regarded VET as inferior education leading to the “blue collar” works. The situation started to improve since the promulgation of the “Vocational Education Law” (職業教育法) in 1996, which helps promote the status of VET in the society and provides legal protection for the development of vocational education. In addition, the Chinese government allocated a dedicated funding of around RMB 10 billion (about HK\$12.3 billion) during the 11th Five-year Plan period (2006 – 2010) to enhance VET through infrastructure building and teacher training. These efforts have demonstrated the government’s commitment to VET and instilled the confidence in the public towards VET.

4.41 At present, China is the market leader in the manufacturing industry and thus the demand for skilled workers with formal education is gradually increasing. Amongst other components in the Chinese education system (including basic education, higher education and adult education), VET is becoming more significant. Given the enhanced support from the Chinese government to VET, more secondary students opt for vocational route with a hope to becoming a skilled labour with good

²⁰ Sources: Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China; 《國務院關於職業教育改革與發展情況的報告》, 2009; 《中國高等職業教育人才培養質量年度報告》, 2013; and 《2013年中國大學生就業報告》, MyCos Data, China



career prospect after graduation. In 2001, only 11.6 million students were enrolled in vocational schools for their senior secondary education. The number rapidly increased to 21.1 million in 2012. In 2012, the employment rate of graduates completing tertiary vocational education was 90.4%, which was comparable to that of the undergraduates at 90.9%.

Learning from International Practices

4.42 In order to learn the best practices in VET, China is actively participating in international cooperation by establishing exchanges with different countries including the UK, Germany and Australia. The Chinese government is also encouraging the active collaboration between the industries and vocational schools to sustain the healthy development of VET. In October 2014, China hosted the 2014 World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics World Conference, which brought together leaders of the applied higher education system to discuss the latest trends in the sector and helped establish networks with the international counterparts.

4.43 With reference to the success of the dual system in Germany and Switzerland, the Ministry of Education in China is exploring to implement the dual track system on a pilot basis in all provinces. The provincial education authority will formulate the respective policy and determine on the industries/employers and vocational institutions to be engaged, and the allowance to the employers and trainees may vary among provinces.

4.44 With the development of vocational education, the Chinese government is also putting more efforts in enhancing the research on vocational education. A number of institutions have been established to carry out various forms of VET research at different levels, by collaborating with vocational schools and academic organisations.

Learning Points from Experience Outside Hong Kong

4.45 Due to the difference in historical, social and economic circumstances between Hong Kong and other places, the Task Force notes that the systems of and practices in VET outside Hong Kong may not be directly adopted in the Hong Kong context. Nonetheless, the following learning points and issues for thought are identified –

(a) Wide Coverage of VET

4.46 In Germany, VET covers a wide range of disciplines, from office clerk to mechatronics or biology technician to process engineer. In Switzerland, the terms VET and PET are used – VET refers to basic vocational education at upper secondary level while PET refers to vocational education at tertiary level. **So what is the definition and coverage of VET in Hong Kong?**

(b) Heavy Involvement of Industries

4.47 The success of apprenticeship training in Germany and Switzerland lies on the heavy involvement of employers in addition to the structured approach to entry into a profession/guild. In Germany, in particular, chambers and professional organisations are heavily engaged in setting VET examinations and establishing VET programmes with vocational schools. Therefore, the labour market factors are remarkably well integrated into the system of vocational schools and the qualifications offered are highly recognised by the employers. The dual system, an integration of classroom learning and part-time working in the training company, is also proven to be a very effective approach of providing VET. **Can more be done in Hong Kong in terms of the industries' participation in the provision of VET programmes?**

(c) State-of-the-art Facilities of VET Campuses

4.48 Quality facilities and a contemporary campus are perceived as a concrete proof of quality provision of VET. In Singapore, the government has provided land and invested in the transformation of VET by consolidating and converting 10 ITE campuses to three mega campuses, with state-of-the-art facilities to enhance the quality of vocational education. The Chinese government also allocated a dedicated funding to enhance VET through infrastructure building. **Can more be done to enhance the facilities of VET providers in Hong Kong?**

(d) Career and Life Planning in Secondary Education

4.49 In secondary schools, career and life planning is an important platform for teachers to communicate career-related information including further study pathways to students. In Germany, schools are responsible for incorporating elements of vocational orientation in the curriculum of secondary education. In the case of Switzerland, career guidance could begin in the sixth year of schooling (12 years old) and career guidance session is included in the compulsory education for the eighth and ninth years. Students are provided with opportunities to visit career centres with independent professional career service and tools for assessing students' talent and abilities. Moreover, there are aptitude tests and classes on writing application letters for apprenticeship positions for students in the final year of the 9-year compulsory education. **Can more be done in the career and life planning education in Hong Kong?**

(e) Provision of Incentives

4.50 The Australian government and state governments provide different incentives for individuals and companies including living away from home subsidy, completion bonus and payroll tax exemption to encourage their participation in VET. **What more can be provided by the government and industries in Hong Kong to attract secondary school leavers to pursue VET?**

5. Awareness and Perception towards Vocational Education

5.1 In order to measure the perception on VET of different stakeholders, the Task Force has conducted a series of public engagement activities in the past year. They are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Focus Group Interviews

5.2 The Task Force, through a consultant, conducted 11 focus group interviews in July and August 2014 with a view to measuring the perception on VET of different groups of stakeholders and identifying effective means to promote VET. A total of 74 respondents were engaged in the 11 focus group interviews. They included students from Secondary 2 to 6 of different local secondary schools, VET students and graduates from different providers, parents of secondary school students, parents of VET students and graduates, secondary school teachers including career masters/mistresses and vice school heads, school heads of local secondary schools, representatives of VET providers including labour unions, as well as employers of VET graduates. A summary of the findings from the focus group interviews is at [Annex A](#).

Survey

5.3 The Task Force, through EDB, conducted a survey using questionnaires from July to August 2014 to gauge the views of various stakeholder groups including secondary school students, their parents, secondary school teachers as well as VET students/graduates on their perception of VET and suggestions on how best to promote VET in the community. Four sets of questionnaires (over 9 000 in total) were issued to these stakeholders and around 5 000 completed questionnaires were received with an overall response rate of about 55%. The percentage of respondents choosing each option in the questionnaires is set out at [Annex B](#).

Roundtable Discussion

5.4 The Task Force conducted four roundtable discussion sessions with major chambers of commerce and industrial associations, youth associations, school sponsoring bodies and Members of the Legislative Council Panel on Education in August 2014. A total of 36 participants took part in the four sessions.



Written Submissions

5.5 The Task Force issued letters in July 2014 to major VET providers including labour unions inviting views and suggestions on promoting VET in Hong Kong. A total of six written submissions were received.

Discussion Sessions with Secondary School Principals

5.6 In addition to the above, the Task Force met a total of 37 secondary school principals in early 2015 to listen to their views directly on how to better promote VET.

Findings from Public Engagement Activities

5.7 The following paragraphs summarise the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the findings from the above public engagement activities.

Awareness and Attitude

5.8 From the focus group interviews, VET was perceived by stakeholders in general as strongly associated with training of vocational skills, practical and specific for particular industries. Personal interests, academic results/ learning capability, future career prospects and teaching quality of VET programmes were the key consideration factors for deciding whether to pursue VET. While VET was perceived as less academically focused and more suitable for students who were not eligible for university education, the stakeholders considered that VET was effective in helping students with interests in particular industries to develop their career path. In fact, some parent respondents remarked that VET had boosted up the confidence level of their children and had a positive impact on their personal development. The parent respondents were supportive should their children were determined to pursue VET. However, some of them were reluctant to encourage their children to pursue VET given the perception of VET leading to a lower qualification and lesser competitiveness in future career pursuit.



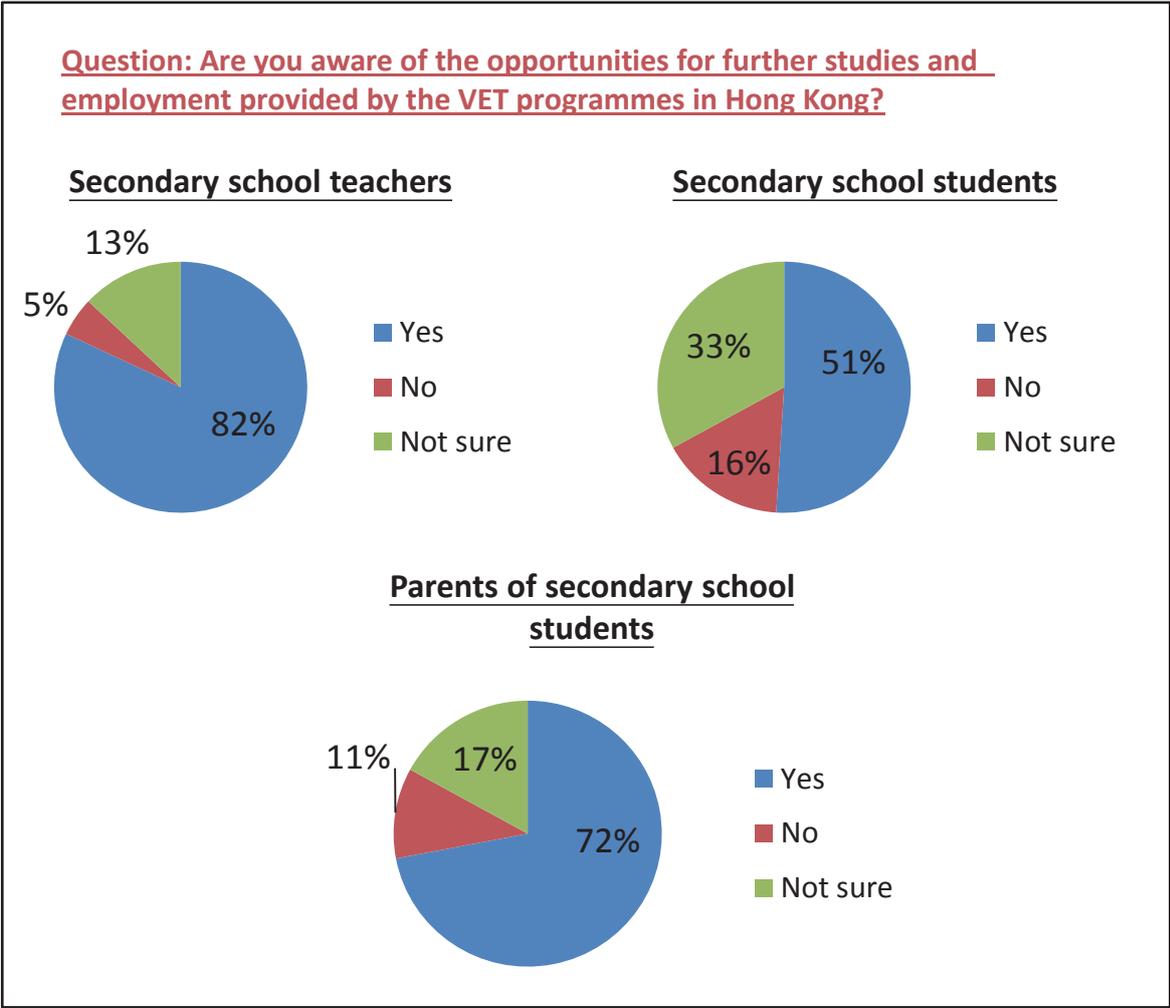
5.9 Similar comments as those mentioned above were made during the roundtable discussions and in the written submissions received. In particular, stakeholders generally considered that there was a deep-rooted bias against VET being a second choice. Some opined that negative public attitude and perception had obscured the benefits of VET to young people.

5.10 In the discussion sessions targeting secondary school principals, respondents added that parents' resistance against the vocational route was still one of the biggest barriers for students to pursue VET. The principals also reflected that VET was considered as specialised training for employment which might limit the whole-person development of a student. Separately, there were views that VET providers should strive to enhance the quality of their programmes and the teaching staff should strengthen support service to students.

5.11 According to the survey results, 72% parents of secondary school students and 82% secondary school teachers were aware of VET-related articulation and career options. However, it is worthy to note that only 51% of secondary school students were aware of such information.



Chart 5.1 Awareness of VET-related articulation and career options by different stakeholders



5.12 Despite being perceived as a second choice, 61% of secondary school students, 78% of their parents and 76% of VET students/graduates considered that VET had a fairly positive or very positive image in Hong Kong. However, only 37% of secondary school teachers believed so. On the other hand, while only 21% of secondary school students, 9% of their parents and 17% of VET students/graduates considered that VET had a fairly negative or very negative image in Hong Kong, as many as 57% of secondary school teachers thought so. In spite of the above, only 4% of secondary school teachers would not advise their students to pursue VET (versus 34% of secondary school students would not consider pursuing VET programmes, and 28% of their parents would not advise their children to pursue the same).

Table 5.1 Image of VET considered by different stakeholders

Question: Overall speaking, do you think that VET has a very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative or very negative image in Hong Kong?

	Very Positive	Fairly Positive	Fairly Negative	Very Negative	No Comment
Secondary school students	7%	54%	19%	2%	17%
Parents of secondary school students	19%	59%	9%	0%	13%
Secondary school teachers	5%	32%	50%	7%	5%
VET students /graduates	7%	69%	15%	2%	8%

5.13 According to the survey results, when comparing with secondary school students and their parents, secondary school teachers and VET students/graduates were more optimistic about the employment opportunities and career prospect that VET could lead to. 57% of secondary school teachers and 69% of VET students/graduates (versus 34% of secondary school students and 41% of their parents) considered that it would be more likely for a VET graduate to find a job as compared with those completing general secondary and higher education.

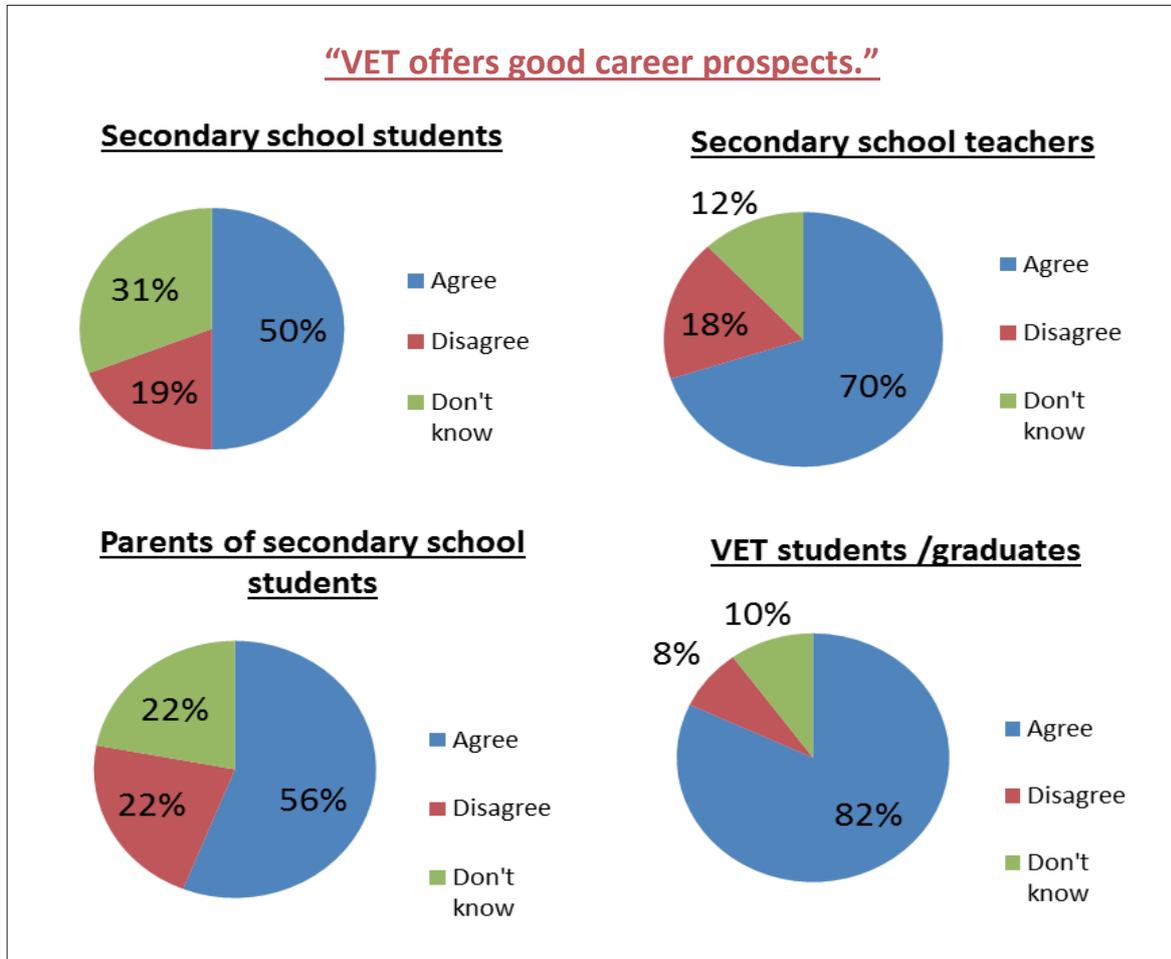
Table 5.2 *Different stakeholders' perception on career opportunities provided by VET*

Question: Do you think that people who completed VET are more likely or less likely to find a job than people who completed their general secondary or higher education?

	More likely	Less likely	No Difference	No Comment
Secondary school students	34%	32%	19%	15%
Parents of secondary school students	41%	31%	20%	7%
Secondary school teachers	57%	5%	20%	18%
VET students /graduates	69%	6%	18%	7%

5.14 Regarding career prospect, while 82% of VET students/graduates and 70% of secondary school teachers believed that VET offered good career prospects, only 50% of secondary school students and 56% of their parents considered so.

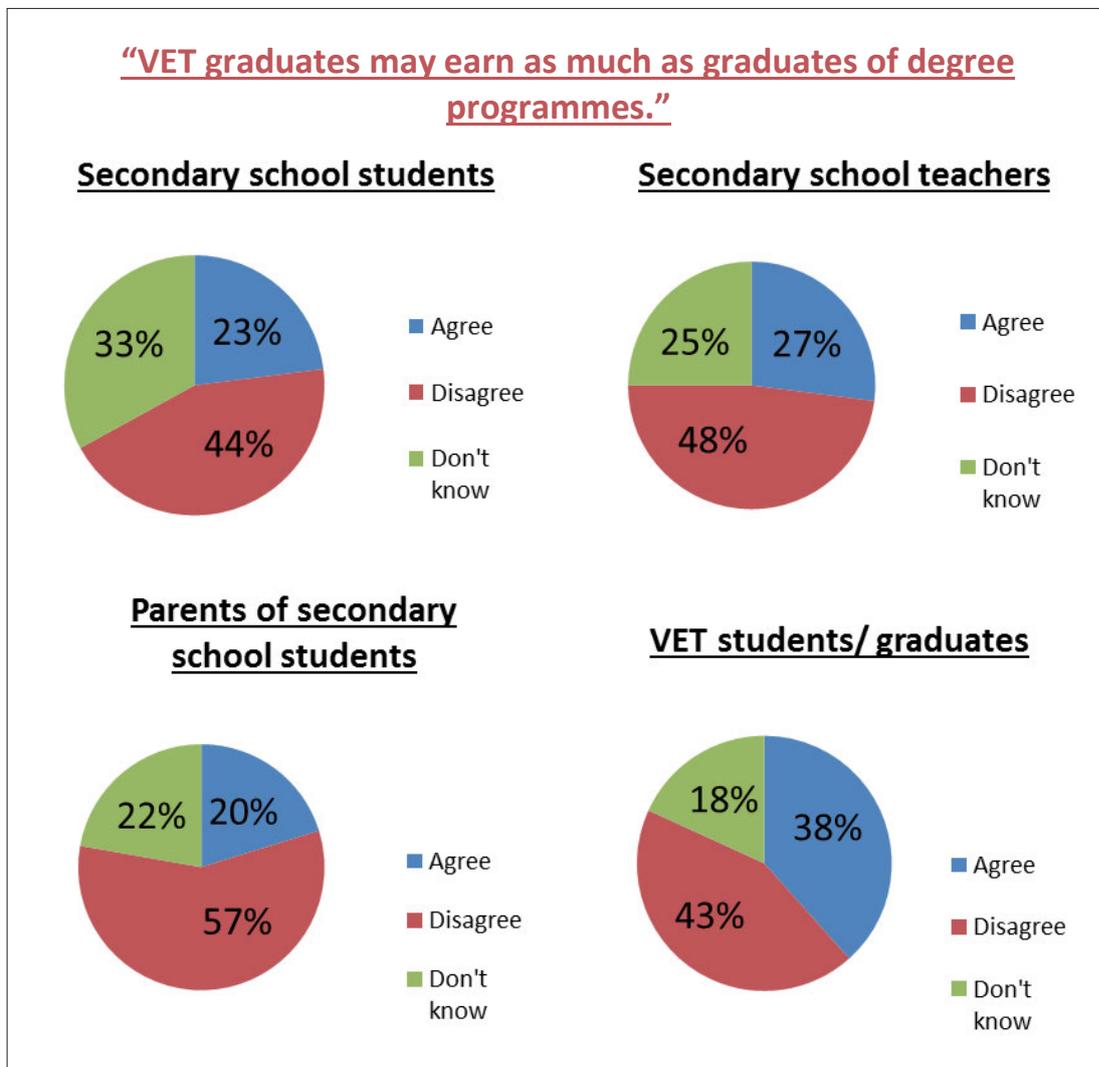
Chart 5.2 Perception on career prospects provided by VET



5.15 Some stakeholders commented during roundtable discussions and in written submissions that the remuneration package, working conditions and social status of VET-related career were important factors for deciding whether to pursue the relevant VET programmes. Besides, some commented that the progression pathways of some VET-related career were unclear. Secondary school principals in the discussion sessions made similar comments. Many stakeholders considered that employers should devise comprehensive human resource strategy to attract and retain staff, covering the remuneration package, working conditions and progression pathways.

5.16 In relation to the salary earned by VET graduates, there were also some findings from the survey. 44% of secondary school students, 57% of their parents, 48% of secondary school teachers and 43% of VET students/graduates responded that they did not believe VET graduates could earn a salary comparable to that of a degree graduate in general.

Chart 5.3 Stakeholders' views on salary earned by VET graduates when comparing to degree graduates in general





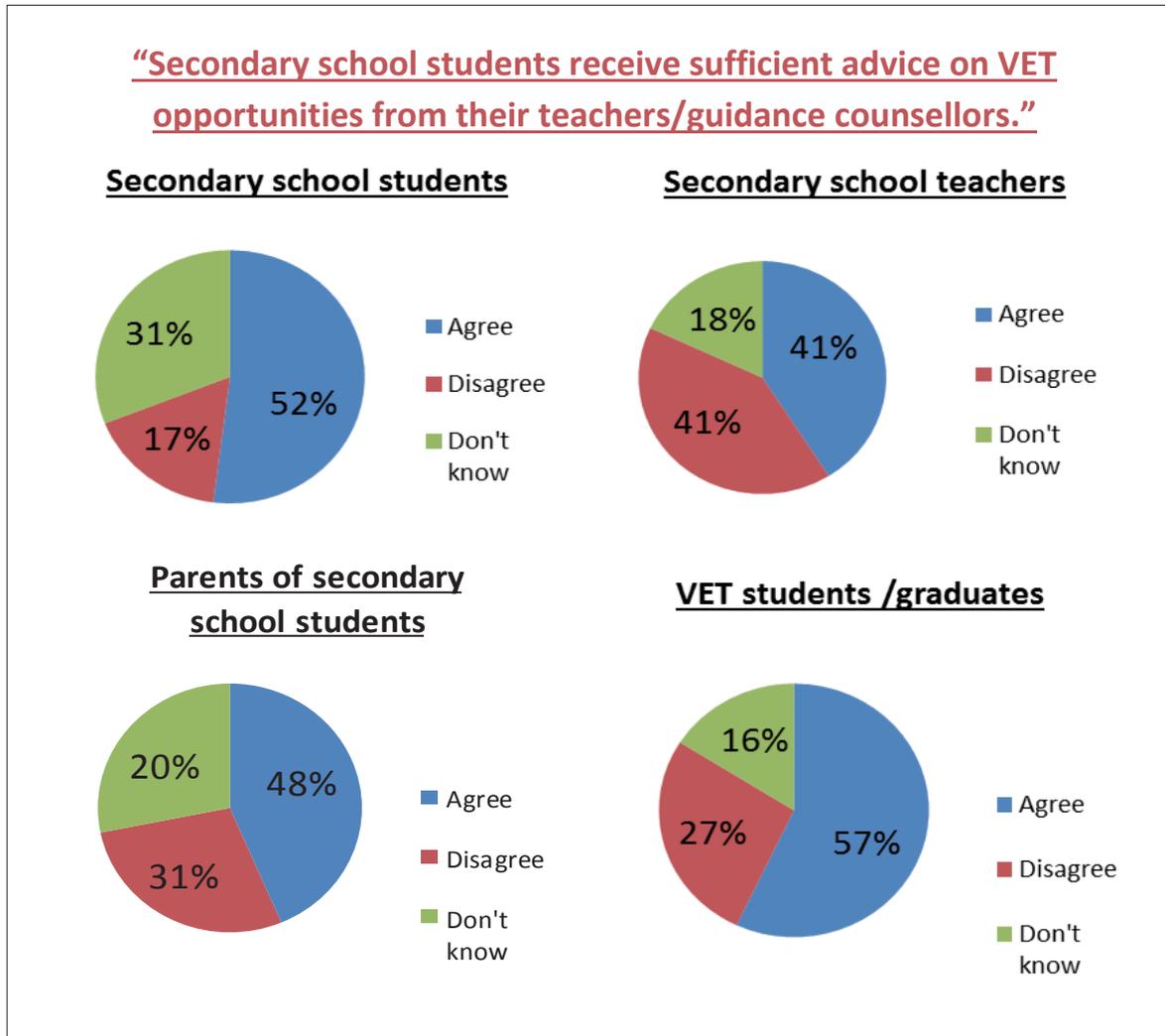
Information Source

5.17 Some secondary school student respondents and parent respondents commented during the focus group interviews that most VET-related information was delivered by VET providers at present and they cast doubt on the creditability of such information. They considered that more public confidence could be instilled should the information be disseminated by the government. Overall, the respondents considered that recognition of VET qualifications by employers and the government was essential for wider acceptance of VET, alongside competitiveness of VET graduates in further studies and the job market.

5.18 Moreover, the teacher respondents from the focus group interviews considered that there was abundant information on the Internet about VET but the information was scattered and not organised, rendering any comparison difficult. The secondary school principals in the discussion sessions shared the same view and suggested developing an online databank setting out industry and career information. The articulation pathways of VET for further studies and future career were also perceived as unclear to some secondary school students and their parents.

5.19 According to the results of the survey, 52% of secondary school students, 48% of their parents and 57% of VET students/graduates considered that secondary school students had obtained sufficient advice on VET opportunities from their teachers/guidance counsellors. However, an equal percentage of secondary school teachers (both 41%) agreed and disagreed to this statement.

Chart 5.4 Stakeholders' views on VET information obtained from teachers/guidance counsellors



5.20 As regards the source of information for planning or recommending articulation pathways after secondary schools, the following table sets out the top three sources for different groups of stakeholders.

Table 5.3 Source of information on articulation pathways

Question: Which of the following sources of information, if any, have you used or are you using to plan your/ to advise your children on/ to advise your students on educational path after leaving secondary school?

	Secondary school students	Parents of secondary school students	Secondary school teachers	VET students/ graduates
Top 1 (%)	Internet and online social networks (70%)	Exhibitions / education fairs (54%)	Internet and online social networks (88%)	Internet and online social networks (68%)
Top 2 (%)	School (Teachers / guidance counsellors) (67%)	Newspapers; School (50%)	Events; Exhibitions / education fairs (75%)	Friends/ schoolmates (55%)
Top 3 (%)	Television (44%)	Internet and online social networks (39%)	Newspapers (68%)	School (Teachers / guidance counsellors) (53%)

Promotion of VET

5.21 From the focus group interviews, stakeholders in general looked for a clear positioning and definition of VET. Some secondary school student respondents and parent respondents considered that the word “training” implied a lower qualification. A more professional image of VET and the relevant providers should be established and the perception that VET was more for students not eligible for university education should be changed. Instead, VET should be emphasised as a valued choice for students based on their interest and preference. Some also considered it necessary to uplift the professional image of VET-related industries and suggested further promotion of QF to support the professional recognition of VET qualifications.



5.22 Overall, stakeholders considered that VET should be promoted by the government to enhance credibility, ensure impartial and standardised information be disseminated and demonstrate recognition by the government. The promotion should also come with practical information such as campus life of VET students and their learning mode, future prospects of graduates and employment situation. Direct communication with VET teachers and students was preferred by secondary school students. Parents' education of the values of VET with the provision of more information was equally important.

5.23 Similar comments were made during the roundtable discussions, the discussion sessions with the secondary school principals and in the written submissions received. In addition, stakeholders in general considered that the promotion of VET should bring out the professional image of related industries as well as the progression pathways they might provide. Some suggested involving industry role models in launching an image-enhancing project through TV programmes, Announcement in Public Interest (“API”) and online platforms, etc. These success stories could uncover various articulation options to parents and promote the message of “Every Trade has its Master (行行出專才)”.

5.24 It was also gathered from the roundtable discussions and in the written submissions received that major international events such as WorldSkills Competition and Youth Skills Competition showcasing students' achievement in VET and students' learning outcomes in simulated environment were particularly useful and effective to inspire the interest of students in pursuing a vocational route in their education.

5.25 As for promotion to parents specifically, some suggested providing more talks and online discussion forum. For teachers, more sharing sessions and visits to the campus of VET providers might be arranged. VET sessions should also be provided to prospective teachers pursuing teacher education at local tertiary institutions.

5.26 The results of the survey have identified some effective means to promote VET. In particular, it is worthy to note that 48% of secondary school students and 54% of VET students/graduates considered that provision of allowance/study subsidy from the government/industries is one of the most effective means to promote VET; 42% secondary school students, 41% of their parents and 59% school teachers considered more talks / exhibitions on VET programmes as an effective promotion means of VET, while about 40% secondary school students would look for more support from teachers and guidance counsellors for VET and related career information. The most important promotion means perceived by different stakeholders are set out in the following table.

Table 5.4 Effective means to promote VET

Question: What can be done to better promote VET in Hong Kong?				
	Secondary school students	Parents of secondary school students	Secondary school teachers	VET students/ graduates
Top 1 (%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better facilities and more resources; and Allowances/study subsidy provided by government/ industries (48%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better facilities and more resources (56%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More support for secondary school students from teachers/guidance counsellors; Closer alignment with the industries; More industry attachments/ internship opportunities for VET students; and More job opportunities for VET graduates (71%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowances/study subsidy provided by government/ industries; and More industry attachments/ internship opportunities for VET students (54%)
Top 2 (%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More talks/exhibitions on VET programmes (42%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closer alignment with the industries (50%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent education so that they would support their children to pursue VET (64%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More job opportunities for VET graduates (53%)
Top 3 (%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More support for secondary school students from teachers/guidance counsellors (40%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better opportunities for articulation to degree level education (46%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More information about VET (63%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better facilities and more resources (37%)

Career and Life Planning

5.27 The results of the survey reflected that secondary school teachers, alongside parents/family members and friends/schoolmates, are a major source of advice for secondary school students on articulation pathways after school. On this, 75% of secondary school students have obtained advice from their teachers on articulation pathways after leaving secondary schools.

Chart 5.5 *Source of advice on articulation pathways*



5.28 From the focus group interviews, some stakeholders considered that it was important to stimulate the students' career aspiration since junior secondary level with actual workplace experience, taster programmes, etc., and the VET pathways should be included in the career and life planning education in secondary schools. This was echoed by opinions gathered from the roundtable discussions and in the written submissions received that consideration might be given to arranging more taster or internship programmes for secondary school students so that they could have a better idea about the work nature of different career which in turn would facilitate their career and life planning. Individual stakeholder even suggested a mandatory VET session for all secondary school students.



5.29 During the discussion sessions targeting secondary school principals, there were comments that in view of the diverse interest and career aspiration of students, the provision of individual and customised counselling was necessary. A whole school approach involving all teaching staff in career and life planning education was thus recommended such that students could have more access to quality career advice from the teachers who had frequent contact with them. In particular, all teachers/career masters should be educated about the value of VET, which allowed them to better communicate the relevant information to students. Furthermore, more promotion should be conducted for BSPP and more work experience opportunities be provided by NGOs and business sectors for secondary students.

5.30 From the roundtable discussions and in written submissions received, some stakeholders emphasised the need to provide adequate VET-related information to teachers as well as prospective teachers through different means to ensure that they understood the local VET system and were able to advise different articulation options for their students. Some also suggested the provision of aptitude tests for secondary school students with follow up guidance for better career and life planning.

Government and Industry Support

5.31 As mentioned under paragraph 5.22 above, there were views from the focus group interviews that VET should be promoted by the government instead of individual VET providers in order to enhance credibility, ensure impartial and standardised information be disseminated and demonstrate recognition by the government. From the roundtable discussions with different stakeholders, discussion sessions with secondary school principals and in written submissions received, some stakeholders opined that both the support from the government and industries were essential to the promotion of VET. On government support, the suggestions included –

- 
- It was advisable to provide incentives to encourage students to pursue VET;
 - The Pilot Scheme launched by VTC with the support from the government and industries starting from the 2014/15 academic year was commendable and should be continued;
 - More University Grants Committee-funded undergraduate senior year places should be provided for the articulation of higher diploma graduates; and
 - Campus facilities were not only critical to effective teaching and learning, but also represented the quality, status and image of the education and training being provided. The students and their parents would be more convinced of the value of VET if the campuses and facilities concerned were prestigious and modern. Consideration should be given to the development of modern and iconic campuses for VET in Hong Kong.

5.32 As for industry support, the suggestions included –

- There were a number of ways that stakeholders in industries could make useful contribution to VET development, including specifying competency requirement in the workplace, providing input to curriculum development of VET programmes, offering more opportunities for internships and employment, etc.;
- Industries should play an important role in the promotional campaign for VET in the provision of information related to the latest developments of the industries concerned; and
- Industry sectors should devise comprehensive human resource strategy to attract and retain staff, covering the remuneration package, working conditions and progression pathways.

6. Recommendations

Issues/Problems Identified

6.1 According to the findings from the public engagement activities, a number of major issues/problems were identified. They are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Definition of VET

6.2 At present, there is no clear definition of VET under the relevant government policy in Hong Kong. The common perception among some stakeholders such as students, parents and teachers is that VET refers to vocationally-oriented programmes with the education and training of practical skills specific for certain industries. Besides, VET is commonly perceived as education and training leading to relatively lower qualifications at or below sub-degree level, for instance, higher diploma programmes²¹, apprenticeship programmes and some diploma/certificate programmes with a high percentage of the curriculum consisting of specialised contents (e.g. learning related to disciplines, professions and vocational skills), etc. **However, in fact, some degree level programmes in the higher education sector are also vocationally or professionally-oriented, for example, those in the disciplines of nursing, engineering, etc.**

6.3 Some people may also have the traditional perception that VET leads to “blue collar” work in productive enterprises, while non-VET leads to “white collar” employment in offices. However, in the present Information Age, both the nature of work and preparation for work have undergone significant changes. It would no longer be possible to clearly classify many industries as “white collar” or “blue collar”.

6.4 In considering a definition for VET, reference could be made to German and Swiss vocational education systems. In Germany, VET covers a wide range of disciplines, from office clerk to mechatronics or biology technician to process engineer. In Switzerland, the terms **VET** and **professional education and training (“PET”)** are

²¹ In higher diploma (“HD”) programmes, at least 60% of the curriculum consists of specialised content in specific disciplines, professions or vocational skills. On the other hand, in associate degree programmes, at least 60% of curriculum consists of generic contents (e.g. language, information technology, general education, etc).

used – VET refers to basic vocational education at upper secondary level while PET refers to vocational education at tertiary level. It should however be noted that in Switzerland, they have established post-secondary institutions called the universities of applied sciences and PET colleges which are separated from the general universities.

6.5 Reference may also be made to the definitions adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (“UNESCO”) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (“OECD”). In UNESCO, the term “**technical vocational education and training**” is used and it is defined as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, *in addition to general education* –

- (a) the study of technologies and related sciences; and
- (b) the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life²².

6.6 In “*OECD (2014), Skills Beyond School: Synthesis Report, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, OECD Publishing*”²³, “**post-secondary vocational education and training**” includes the programmes and qualifications that prepare students for particular occupations or careers that are beyond upper secondary level, and that would normally require at least six months full-time preparation. **Higher level vocational qualifications, including professional bachelor degrees, are included in this definition.** Moreover, it was mentioned in the aforementioned publication that “**professional education and training**” should become the internationally accepted description for substantial post-secondary vocational programmes (equivalent to more than six months full-time).

²² Source:
http://www.uis.unesco.org/StatisticalCapacityBuilding/Workshop%20Documents/Education%20workshop%20dox/2011_Vina%20del%20Mar/English%20documents/10_TVET_UNESCO_OREALC_EN.pdf

²³ The report can be accessed at:
<http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/Skills-Beyond-School-Synthesis-Report.pdf>

Perception Towards VET

6.7 From the survey, 61% of secondary school students, 78% of their parents and 76% of VET students/graduates considered that VET has a fairly positive or very positive image in Hong Kong, but only 37% of secondary school teachers believed so²⁴. Nonetheless, only 4% of secondary school teachers would not advise their students to pursue VET (versus 34% of secondary school students would not consider pursuing VET programmes, and 28% of their parents would not advise their children to pursue the same). The major reason for students/parents not to pursue/advise their children to pursue VET is because the students' academic results allow them to pursue other articulation pathways. From the focus group interviews, it is also noted that VET is generally perceived by secondary school students and their parents as a second choice among articulation options, and is for those not eligible for university education.

VET-related Information and Career and Life Planning

6.8 The Task Force's survey indicated that only 51% of the upper secondary school students were aware of VET-related articulation and career options (versus 72% of parents and 82% of secondary school teachers). Enhancement of students' knowledge about VET through wider publicity as well as career guidance is necessary in order to promote VET as a valued choice among secondary school students. There are also views during the public engagement activities that parents were not aware of the latest developments in different industries and the progression pathways, hence they were unable to guide their children in choosing the right path for further studies.

Involvement of Industries

6.9 The success of apprenticeship training in Germany and Switzerland, for example, lies on the heavy involvement and investment of employers in addition to the structured approach to entry into a profession/guild. However, such tradition and culture have yet to be developed among employers in Hong Kong in general. Besides,

²⁴ On the other hand, while only 21% of secondary school students, 9% of their parents and 17% of VET students/graduates considered that VET had a fairly negative or very negative image in Hong Kong, as many as 57% of secondary school teachers thought so.

closer collaboration between VET providers and employers in delivering VET is required under a dual track learning model (i.e. combining classroom study with the practical know-how gained in the workplace) in that there should be a close relationship between what the apprentices have learned at VET providers and the work to be carried out in the workplace. Competitive remuneration package after completion of VET training as well as clear progression pathways are also key determining factors for youngsters to decide whether to pursue VET.

Involvement of Government

6.10 Overall speaking, stakeholders consider that the government has an indispensable role in promoting VET, as it would be more convincing to the general public for the government, rather than individual VET providers, to promote wider acceptance and recognition of VET. Financial support from the government is also important during the process.

6.11 With the issues/problems identified, the Task Force considers that the **long term vision** is to **change the entrenched perception of VET being a second choice**. To this end, it recommends a three-pronged strategy that covers the following –

- Strategy 1: Rebranding VET;
- Strategy 2: Strengthening promotion; and
- Strategy 3: Sustaining efforts.

Recommendations

Strategy 1: Rebranding VET

Definition of VET

6.12 As pointed out in paragraph 6.2 above, there is no clear definition of VET under the relevant government policy in Hong Kong. Making reference to the relevant terms and definitions used overseas or adopted by UNESCO and OECD, and taking into account the fact that there is all along no clear distinction between “vocational” and “professional” education in the Hong Kong context, **the Task Force recommends the government to rebrand VET in Hong Kong as “vocational and professional**

education and training (“VPET”) covering programmes up to degree level with a high percentage of curriculum consisting of specialised contents in vocational skills or professional knowledge. In other words, VPET is not confined to the education and training provided in, for example, VTC and other smaller training providers but some higher education institutions in Hong Kong as well. With this, VPET equips learners with necessary practical skills, attitude and knowledge for their effective performance in the relevant professions/industries. As a result, the VPET-related industries are also wide-ranging. From this point onwards, VET will be renamed as VPET in this report.

Strategy 2: Strengthening Promotion

(a) Promotion of Professional Image of VPET

(i) Publicity Campaign

6.13 From the earlier stakeholder engagement activities, it is noted that VPET is perceived to be inferior to university education in general, even though stakeholders do recognise the merits of pursuing VPET. Entrenchment of such perception, especially among parents and youngsters alike, is adverse to the development of VPET and related industries. On the government’s part, it is in the public interest to make use of appropriate channels to roll out publicity to raise the profile of VPET. This should target at the community at large and the youngsters as the potential beneficiary. According to the findings from the stakeholder engagement activities, government’s efforts are no substitute to the VPET providers and industries’ own initiatives in correcting such bias. It is important to project to the community what VPET is indeed about for the economy and for the youngsters.

6.14 To change the traditional perception towards VPET, **the Task Force recommends the following in promoting the professional image of VPET to the community –**

- (i) the government to produce Announcement in Public Interest (“API”) on TV/radio by involving industry role models where appropriate. The API may also be broadcast on Facebook, YouTube, dedicated portal for VPET (see paragraphs 6.24 to 6.25 below) and other online media²⁵;**

²⁵ Consideration may also be given to organising a competition on multi-media production (such as micro-film and radio play) featuring VPET to arouse the interest of young people and thus raise their awareness of VPET.

- (ii) **the government to produce TV drama series (including related publicity and production of DVDs), presenting real success stories of persons graduated from VPET programmes and make them continuously accessible to the public through the VPET Portal which facilitates guidance to students; and**
- (iii) **the government to continue supporting major VPET provider(s) to organise large-scale skills competitions to showcase VPET students' achievement and provide interactive activities for secondary school students' experience, or even consider bidding for the hosting of such competitions in Hong Kong in due course with a view to raising public awareness of the professionalism of VPET and related industries as well as enhancing the skill level of local talent²⁶.**

6.15 Suggested messages / contents that may be included in the API and/or TV drama series include –

- Students pursuing VPET are not inferior to those following the traditional academic route. VPET students may also have the ability to pursue traditional academic education but they have chosen VPET according to their own interests. In other words, VPET should not be regarded as a second choice;
- VPET graduates with lower qualifications may articulate to higher education under a multiple entry and exit system underpinned by QF and hence not a dead end;

²⁶ In the upcoming WorldSkills Competition to be held in Brazil in August 2015, more than 1 000 participants will compete in over 40 skills including construction, personal services, creative arts, manufacturing, etc. Such international skills competitions have been a good platform to raise the profile of VPET in the region and promote exchange on best practices in professional education among industry leaders from the globe.

- Success stories of industry personnel who pursued VPET to promulgate “Every Trade has its Master (行行出專才)”. Along the same vein, employers do endorse and recognise VPET programmes, providing progression pathways in different industries for VPET graduates;
- Positive word-of-mouth of parents with their children’s real experience in VPET;
- VPET-related career and promising industries with keen manpower needs; and
- VPET’s contribution to the economy of Hong Kong.

6.16 Besides, carefully selected terminology should be used in the publicity materials and in all public documents in future to change the current perception towards VPET, such as “valued choice” instead of “second option”, and “VPET is for those who have good potential to develop in the relevant disciplines” rather than “VPET is for those who are less academically inclined”. To emphasise VPET as an attractive pathway for students who have identified their own interest in the relevant area, the message “VPET is my choice” may be adopted.

6.17 To target youngsters, online and digital channels should mainly be used. However, it is equally important to deploy conventional channels such as TV to target the parents.

(ii) Campus Facilities of VPET Providers

6.18 Some stakeholders have suggested upgrading the campus facilities of VPET providers in order to attract more youngsters to pursue VPET. On this, it is noted that some governments and private institutions in other places have directed resources to provide aesthetically pleasing campuses with state-of-the-art authentic training facilities which are commensurate with their recognition of the importance of VPET. Examples include the Cuisinart Centre for Culinary Excellence at Johnson and Wales University in the United States, the George Brown College in Canada, the Jåttå Vocational School in Norway, etc. Under the support from the Singapore government, the ITE of Singapore has also consolidated ten of their dated campuses into three modern, dignified mega campuses in recent years. This has sent a clear message to

parents and students of the value of VPET and helped position the ITE to become the attractive choice for Singapore's young people.

6.19 Indeed, according to the survey, both secondary school students and their parents considered that better facilities and more resources from VPET providers is one of the most effective means to promote VPET. The Task Force recognises that a modern campus with quality learning facilities could provide a good study environment to students, as well as promote the professional image and high quality education provided by VPET programmes. At the same time, the Task Force notes that the HKSAR government supports the parallel development of both publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong, of which some of them also offer vocationally or professionally-oriented programmes. Among various measures for the self-financing post-secondary education sector, the government allocates land sites at nominal premium or government premises at nominal rent under the Land Grant Scheme, and offers interest-free loan under the Start-up Loan Scheme for constructing or upgrading college premises. The government has also launched the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme to help institutions enhance teaching and learning.

6.20 With the above, **the Task Force recommends the government to facilitate the provision of state-of-the-art facilities to VPET providers in order to provide conducive learning environment to VPET students and enhance the professional image of VPET riding on the existing support schemes or otherwise.**

(iii) Quality of Programmes Offered by VPET Providers and Research Capability

6.21 There have been negative media reports occasionally on the quality of programmes by individual VPET providers. Although they are isolated incidents, the negative news might render the efforts in raising the profile of VPET in vain. The situation can be improved by putting in place more enhancement measures on the delivery of the programmes concerned, including those related to teaching and learning, assessment, etc. The Task Force also considers that enhanced support services for VPET students in particular those Secondary 3 to 5 leavers by VPET providers, with assistance offered to resolve problems faced in their study or otherwise, could help increase the retention rate and attract more youngsters to pursue VPET. On this, **the Task Force recommends VPET providers to enhance quality of their VPET programmes, and strengthen the support services to students where possible.** As a matter of fact, the offering of high quality VPET programmes is beneficial to students and industries concerned and can also help enhance the image of VPET.



6.22 Separately, there are views that VPET providers should also conduct research activities so as to inform teaching and learning and to enhance the profile of VPET as a whole. On this, reference has been made to the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, which provides training to VET/PET teachers, conducts research as one of its four core activities. Their research aims to provide answers to questions such as –

- What is the best way to impart education and training content?
- How should VET and PET programmes be adapted in the changes affecting VET learners, host companies, society and technology?
- What factors influence the willingness of companies to offer apprenticeship positions? What factors motivate young people to choose specific occupations?

6.23 The Task Force notes that VTC, for example, is already conducting small-scale research activities, and practical social and industrial research is a strategic initiative of VTC in its 3-year Strategic Plan for 2014 to 2017. Also, apart from the all along research funding for University Grants Committee-funded institutions, the government has made available \$3 billion to support the research activities of the local self-financing degree-awarding sector (of which some institutions also offer vocationally or professionally-oriented programmes) on a competitive basis since late 2013²⁷. With the above, **the Task Force recommends VPET providers to consider whether it is appropriate for them to engage in (more) research activities (which could be action research, applied research, technology-oriented research other than academic research) to inform teaching and learning, etc.**

²⁷ Seven institutions were invited to submit applications during the First Call for Proposals in late 2013. More institutions such as THEi, a local degree-awarding member institution of VTC, has been covered under the Second Call for Proposals in late 2014.

(b) Provision of More Information about VPET and Related Career

(i) VPET Portal

6.24 In order to provide standardised and impartial information on VPET and the related career as well as to establish a professional and reliable image of VPET, **the Task Force recommends the government to develop and maintain a VPET portal which gathers comprehensive information on VPET programmes and related industries in Hong Kong, as well as links up other relevant portals** for easy access by the general public. Information in the VPET portal should be presented in a user-friendly manner. Suggested contents that may be included in the portal are –

- List of VPET providers and programmes available in Hong Kong, together with the IA/internship opportunities in these programmes;
- Statistics on surveys of VPET graduates;
- Progression pathways in VPET-related industries and labour market information;
- Information on manpower planning (with links to the Report of Manpower Projection) and employment figures;
- Success stories / role models with employers' endorsement; and
- The articulation opportunities provided under QF.

6.25 To make the portal more user-friendly, filters could be added to provide personalised search results according to one's area of interest, desired programme discipline and industry, etc.

(ii) VPET Forum

6.26 The Task Force notes that there are international VPET forums held in various parts of the world from time to time. **The Task Force recommends the government, VPET providers and industry sectors to attend these forums from time to time to keep abreast of the latest development of VPET worldwide.**

6.27 Separately, it is also worth organising local VPET forums from time to time to raise public awareness of VPET and to provide up-to-date information about the developments of VPET in Hong Kong and related industries as well as career to secondary school students, their parents and teachers. In fact, from the earlier survey, 42% secondary school students, 41% of their parents and 59% school teachers considered more talks / exhibitions on VPET programmes as an effective promotion means of VPET. As such, **the Task Force recommends the government or VPET providers to organise local VPET forums from time to time with the participation of the industry sectors, in order to provide up-to-date industry and career information to secondary school students, parents and teachers.** It is hoped that students and parents may also interact with VPET students/graduates, VPET programme providers and industry personnel during these forums to obtain relevant advice. The senior government officials should also show support and help raise the forums' profile by participating in the forums (e.g. delivering a keynote speech).

(c) Promotion of VPET through Career and Life Planning Education

6.28 In Germany and Switzerland, career and life planning education could start in junior secondary level (see paragraphs 4.11 to 4.13 and 4.17 to 4.19 above). In our earlier survey, about 40% of secondary school students expressed that they would look for more support from teachers and career masters for VPET and related career information. As a matter of fact, teachers and career masters should be equipped with sufficient knowledge of VPET, among other articulation and career options, in providing career and life planning education to students. In general, secondary school students in Hong Kong may not be clear about their career aspiration and they have limited information among career options. During the public engagement activities, different stakeholders have suggested enhancing the career and life planning education for secondary school students, in particular when they are still at junior secondary level.



6.29 On this, the Task Force notes that starting from the 2014/15 school year, a recurrent grant of about \$500,000 has been allocated to schools operating senior secondary education levels to help enhance career and life planning education. Further, in the three years from the 2015/16 school year, EDB will enhance, reinforce and review BSPP, which could enhance students' understanding of different trades, develop positive work attitude and prepare them for future employment.

6.30 Separately, the Task Force notes that the Hong Kong Jockey Club will donate \$500 million to fund a five-year programme to help young people discover their interest and abilities and educate them on life and career choices. The programme, expected to start in September 2015, will help 50 secondary schools (including 10 schools for children with special education needs) with support measures and innovations related to professional development framework, support to schools and youths, development of empirically-based assessment tools and related resources, infrastructure building, network building and parental education through cross-sector collaboration. More than 200 000 young people aged 15 to 21 could benefit over the five years.

6.31 As parents have influence on students' perception and acceptance towards VPET, it is equally important to involve parents in the career and life planning education by emphasising the benefits of VPET on students' personal development and communicating clearly the future prospects of VPET in terms of articulation pathways to further studies and future career.

6.32 Making reference to experience outside Hong Kong and taking into account local circumstances, **the Task Force recommends –**

- (i) **EDB to encourage secondary schools to adopt a whole school approach in career and life planning education and enhance individual guidance and support to students to facilitate self-understanding and exploration of multiple pathways including VPET.** First of all, provision of career guidance should not be the sole responsibility of one or two career masters in the school. More often, class teachers and specific subject teachers have more opportunities to share their knowledge and experience with students, which could help students with their career and life planning. For example, a Physics teacher equipped with the relevant knowledge of the



engineering industry may then offer advice to his students on the required qualifications to become an engineer and work life of an engineer. Through engaging all teaching staff in learning the latest developments of VPET and respective career pathways, students could have more access to quality career advice from the teachers who have frequent contact with them. Such involvement of all teachers in career and life planning education could build up the capacity of schools and facilitate the provision of individualised advice to students with diverse aspirations. Separately, empirically-based and localised assessment tools might help provide reference for senior secondary students to understand their own interest and ability, thereby explore possible pathways and to make an informed study/career choice;

- (ii) **VPET providers and major chambers of commerce to arrange (more) training workshops cum visits for principals, teachers and career masters in secondary schools, with the facilitation of EDB through BSPP, so as to provide them with the latest developments of VPET in Hong Kong and the related careers. Such training workshops cum visits should also be extended to prospective secondary school teachers pursuing teaching programmes in tertiary institutions as well as NGOs which play a role in offering articulation and career advice to students.** These training workshops will allow teachers to develop a more positive attitude and deeper understanding of VPET, and enable them to better communicate the merits of VPET to students with their knowledge and experience. EDB would facilitate participation of the principals, teachers and career masters in these training workshops cum visits;
- (iii) **VPET providers and major chambers of commerce to arrange (more) taster programmes for secondary school students with the facilitation of EDB through BSPP.** Taster programmes offered by VPET providers would give secondary school students an idea about what to expect from VPET programmes. On the other hand, taster programmes offered by companies will expose students to authentic workplace environment and arouse their interest in certain industries, as well as provide students with better understanding of the job

requirements in different positions. Good working habits and work ethics should also be cultivated in such programmes; and

- (iv) **VPET providers and major chambers of commerce to organise seminars and visits for parents of secondary school students for their better understanding of VPET and the related careers as well as the progression pathways, with the facilitation of EDB.** Parents should also be advised how to better understand their children's character and interest so as to provide guidance on their children's future career and education options. EDB should assist in liaising with schools and parent-teacher associations or their federations as appropriate.

(d) More Contribution from Industries

(i) Closer Collaboration with VPET Providers

6.33 The success of apprenticeship training in Germany and Switzerland, for example, lies on the heavy involvement and investment of employers. However, such tradition and culture have yet to be developed among employers in Hong Kong in general. Besides, closer collaboration between VPET providers and employers in delivering VPET is required²⁸ in particular under a dual track learning model (i.e. combining classroom study with the practical know-how gained in the workplace) in that there should be a close relationship between what the trainees have learned at VPET providers and the work to be carried out in the workplace. Hence, **the Task Force recommends the major chambers of commerce and VPET providers to have closer collaboration on the design and development of VPET programmes (including the curriculum, IA, etc.) such that the learning outcome could fulfill employers' needs and expectation.**

²⁸ Currently, 21 Training Boards have been set up under VTC to provide advice on the manpower demand and supply and training needs in respective industries and make recommendations on how these needs may be best met by relevant programmes. Other VPET providers also have collaboration with industries on programme design and evaluation in general.

6.34 At present, the 21 Training Boards²⁹ under VTC conduct manpower surveys biennially to collect up-to-date information on the manpower situation, to forecast manpower growth and to craft out measures on catering to the demand for respective industries. As there are new industries developing from time to time, **the Task Force recommends VTC to regularly review the list of Training Boards to cover emerging industries so that manpower surveys would be conducted to better inform VPET training providers and prospective students of the areas with growing manpower demand.**

(ii) Remuneration, Working Conditions and Progression Pathways

6.35 From the earlier stakeholder engagement activities, some stakeholders commented that the remuneration package, working conditions and social status of VPET-related career were important factors for deciding whether to pursue the relevant VPET programmes. Besides, some commented that the progression pathways of some VPET-related career were unclear. In order to attract more youngsters to pursue VPET programmes and join the related industries, **the Task Force recommends the major chambers of commerce to encourage their members to devise comprehensive human resource strategy to attract and retain staff, covering the remuneration package, working conditions and progression pathways, etc.**

(e) Promotion of Applied Learning

6.36 The Task Force notes that in the 2015-17 cohort, 12 out of 40 ApL courses have been quality assured for recognition under QF (QF Level 3) under a pilot exercise. EDB will continue the pilot exercise to further explore linking some more ApL courses to QF in due course. **The Task Force recommends EDB to encourage course providers to arrange accreditation of more ApL courses under QF where appropriate so that apart from the HKDSE, students completing ApL courses**

²⁹ They are Accountancy; Automobile; Banking and Finance Industry; Beauty Care and Hairdressing; Building and Civil Engineering; Chinese Cuisine Training Institute; E&M Services; Electronics and Telecommunications; Hotel, Catering and Tourism; Import/Export/Wholesale Trades; Insurance; Maritime Services; Mass Communications; Metals; Plastics; Printing and Publishing; Real Estate Services; Retail Trade; Security Services; Textile and Clothing; and Transport Logistics Training Boards.

may obtain a separate QF-recognised qualification for further studies in the relevant fields or entry into the industries concerned.

6.37 Besides, wide acceptance of ApL by students and their parents hinges upon the recognition of the attainment in ApL subjects by post-secondary education institutions in student admission. Currently, ApL results are reported in two levels, namely, “Attained” and “Attained with Distinction”. Attainment in ApL subjects is recognised for admission to post-secondary programmes either as elective subjects or considered for award of extra bonus or as additional information, depending on institutions, faculties and programmes. For instance, design-related ApL subjects are considered as elective subjects for admission by the design programme at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University; some programmes of the Chinese University of Hong Kong accept “Attained with Distinction” in some or all ApL subjects as extra electives (that is, the 6th and/or 7th subject) for the award of bonus points; “Attained with Distinction” in an ApL subject will be regarded as having met the requirement of an elective subject whereas “Attained” level would be regarded as a value-added factor to be considered in totality with the Student Learning Profile for the purpose of admission to programmes offered by the Hong Kong Institute of Education. For admission to sub-degree programmes, each student is allowed to use up to two ApL subjects in the application to meet the minimum entrance requirements of Level 2 in five HKDSE subjects (including Chinese Language and English Language).

6.38 The Task Force notes that starting from the 2018 HKDSE Examination, an additional level of performance comparable to Level 4 or above of HKDSE Category A subjects will be introduced in ApL subjects to reflect students’ better performance in ApL, and more details would be provided in July 2015. **The Task Force recommends post-secondary education institutions in Hong Kong to give due consideration of the results of ApL courses attained by students in the HKDSE Examination in student admission as an incentive for students to take ApL and benefit from the experiences and also an incentive for their parents to support them to do so.**

6.39 Separately, under the current funding arrangement, schools with students taking ApL courses are contributing around 25% of the total course fees. Schools have been expressing concerns, especially those with a larger number of ApL students, on the expenses arising from the offering of ApL courses. Some parents and students also reflected being deprived of the opportunity to take ApL courses due to the limited enrolment quota set by individual school possibly due to the schools’ financial constraints. In order to allow more students to enjoy the provision of subject with

vocational elements that would suit their different aptitudes, **the Task Force recommends the government to consider providing 100% grant subsidies to schools for the ApL course fees and encourage more schools to offer ApL courses based on their student profiles.**

(f) *Provision of Financial Support by the Government*

(i) Pilot Training and Support Scheme (“Pilot Scheme”)

6.40 According to the earlier survey, 48% of secondary school students and 54% of VPET students/graduates considered that provision of allowance/study subsidy from the government/industries is one of the most effective means to promote VPET. In this connection, the CE announced in the 2014 Policy Address a series of measures to strengthen vocational education (for details, please refer to paragraphs 2.20 to 2.39 in Chapter 2). They include the introduction of the Pilot Scheme in VTC starting from the 2014/15 academic year, subsequent to the funding approval of the Legislative Council Finance Committee in July 2014. Under the Pilot Scheme, Secondary 3 to Secondary 6 school leavers and eligible adult learners are targeted and apprenticeship training for industries which fulfil certain criteria will be provided to students alongside a guaranteed level of salary and incentive allowance. The Pilot Scheme is expected to benefit 2 000 students in total for two cohorts of intakes. The Pilot Scheme may be extended only if there are unexpended funds after implementing the Pilot Scheme for these two cohorts.

6.41 In other words, a review would need to be conducted in around mid-2015 to decide whether to continue with the Scheme. However, in mid-2015, the first cohort of beneficiary students would not have even completed their year 2 of training, and the government would not have sufficient information to assess the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme. It would therefore be better to extend the Scheme on a pilot basis for at least two more cohorts of students. Then the effectiveness of the Scheme could be assessed in mid-2017 when more information about the completion rate and performance at workplace of those beneficiary students is available.

6.42 With the above, **the Task Force recommends the government to consider extending the Pilot Scheme to benefit more students pending a review.**

(ii) Industrial Attachment

6.43 It is proven that IA, which provides a real-life organisational context for students to develop specific or generic skills, could effectively enhance students' employability. Noting that the arrangement of IA by institutions for students by institutions involves additional manpower resources, the government provides recurrent funding to VTC starting from the 2014/15 academic year to provide IA opportunities for about 9 000 students mainly studying subvented higher diploma programmes and certain Diploma in Vocational Education programmes every year.

6.44 In the 2014/15 academic year, some 20 000 students were admitted to full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree programmes and some 7 000 students were admitted to full-time locally-accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes. Given the importance of IA in enhancing students' employability, **the Task Force recommends the government to extend the IA initiative to benefit students pursuing full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree and undergraduate programmes where applicable.** In this connection, the Task Force notes that the government has established the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund of \$3.52 billion, which aims to enhance the quality of the self-financing post-secondary sector through different initiatives.

(iii) Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions / Sectors

6.45 As one of the 2014 Policy Address initiatives, the government will launch the SSSDP starting from the 2015/16 academic year to subsidise about 1 000 students per cohort to pursue designated full-time locally-accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines, with a view to nurturing talents to meet the manpower demand in Hong Kong. The SSSDP will be implemented on a pilot basis for three cohorts of students, and then subject to a review on its effectiveness. In consultation with all bureaux in the government, a total of 13 programmes with 940 subsidised places under six disciplines are covered under the SSSDP for the 2015/16 cohort –

Table 6.1 Disciplines covered under the SSSDP

Discipline	Number of Subsidised Places
Architecture and engineering	170
Creative industry	200
Health care	420
Logistics	70
Testing and certification	50
Tourism and hospitality	30
Total	940

6.46 The programmes selected have a high level of vocational/professional content. The unit subsidy for students will be administered by a two-tier arrangement in which a subsidy of up to \$40,000 per year is provided to programmes which are not laboratory-based while a higher subsidy of up to \$70,000 per year is provided to more costly programmes which are laboratory-based. The actual tuition fee paid by students will be adjusted downwards after deducting the subsidy.

6.47 The SSSDP is well-received by bureaux, the relevant industries and the self-financing post-secondary sector. The programmes and number of subsidised places will be subject to annual review by the government taking into account the social and economic development in Hong Kong and the needs of the industries. As the SSSDP can help nurture talents to meet the manpower needs of individual industries and promote VPET as a result, **the Task Force recommends the government to consider extending the SSSDP if it is proven effective.**

Strategy 3: Sustaining Efforts

(a) Influence by the Government

6.48 As mentioned in Chapter 2 above, VPET plays a pivotal role in nurturing the requisite human capital in support of Hong Kong's development and the government has attached great importance to VPET as evidenced by a series of measures. It is noted that the CE has highlighted the importance of vocational education and quality manpower resource in the 2014 and 2015 Policy Addresses respectively, and even promoted the value of vocational education in his own blog. Notwithstanding, **the Task Force recommends the government to encourage the senior government officials to seize every opportunity to promote and support VPET on different occasions so as to demonstrate the government's support and recognition of VPET as an integral part of the community.**

(b) Promotion of Qualifications Framework

6.49 As explained in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.4 above, QF plays an important role in underpinning the development of vocational education alongside academic and continuing education. QF facilitates articulation among academic, vocational and continuing education by providing a comprehensive network of learning pathways as demonstrated by Chart 2.1 on the education system in Hong Kong in Chapter 2. In order to sustain the promotion and development of VPET in the long term, promotion of QF is highly important.

6.50 Under QF, SCSs are drawn up by ITACs to specify the competency standards of various levels of their industries, and SCSs are used by ITACs to map out the progression pathway of each industry. In other words, QF also helps provide information about the progression pathways in different industries, together with the competencies required and VPET programmes that may be pursued to acquire the necessary competencies.

6.51 It is also worth noting that competency standards of individual industries may go up to QF Level 7, i.e. the highest level under the QF hierarchy. Examples include the competencies of “Devise overall corporate strategy for the catering industry”, “Innovate multinational enterprise management in catering industry”, etc.

6.52 Despite the publicity on QF since its launch in 2008, stakeholders in general consider that more could be done to enhance the awareness of employers as well as the general public on QF. As a framework to underpin the development of VPET and related industries, QF should also be promoted alongside the promotion of VPET.

6.53 Recognising the importance of QF in maintaining a quality workforce, the CE announced in the 2014 Policy Address to establish a dedicated fund of \$1 billion, namely the QF Fund to provide a steady source of income to support the sustainable development and implementation of QF. The QF Fund was established on 1 September 2014. The QF Fund serves to support, among other schemes/initiatives, public education with a view to enhancing the awareness of QF. With the above, **the Task Force recommends EDB to enhance the publicity efforts on QF targeting at employers and the general public. Articulation pathways for lifelong learning and progression pathways for different industries under QF should also be further promoted.** It is worthy to note that the element of QF has already been incorporated into the career and life planning education for secondary school students.

6.54 In addition, **the Task Force recommends the major chambers of commerce to encourage their members to make reference to QF in recruitment and promotion, so as to increase the relevance of QF to learners and practitioners which would in turn help promote VPET.**

(c) Tracking Surveys on Attitude Change

6.55 During the past year, the Task Force conducted a survey using questionnaires to gauge the views of various stakeholder groups including secondary school students, their parents, secondary school teachers as well as VPET students/graduates on their perception of VPET and how best to promote VPET. Focus group interviews, discussion sessions targeting secondary school principals as well as roundtable discussions were also conducted to collect views from different stakeholders.

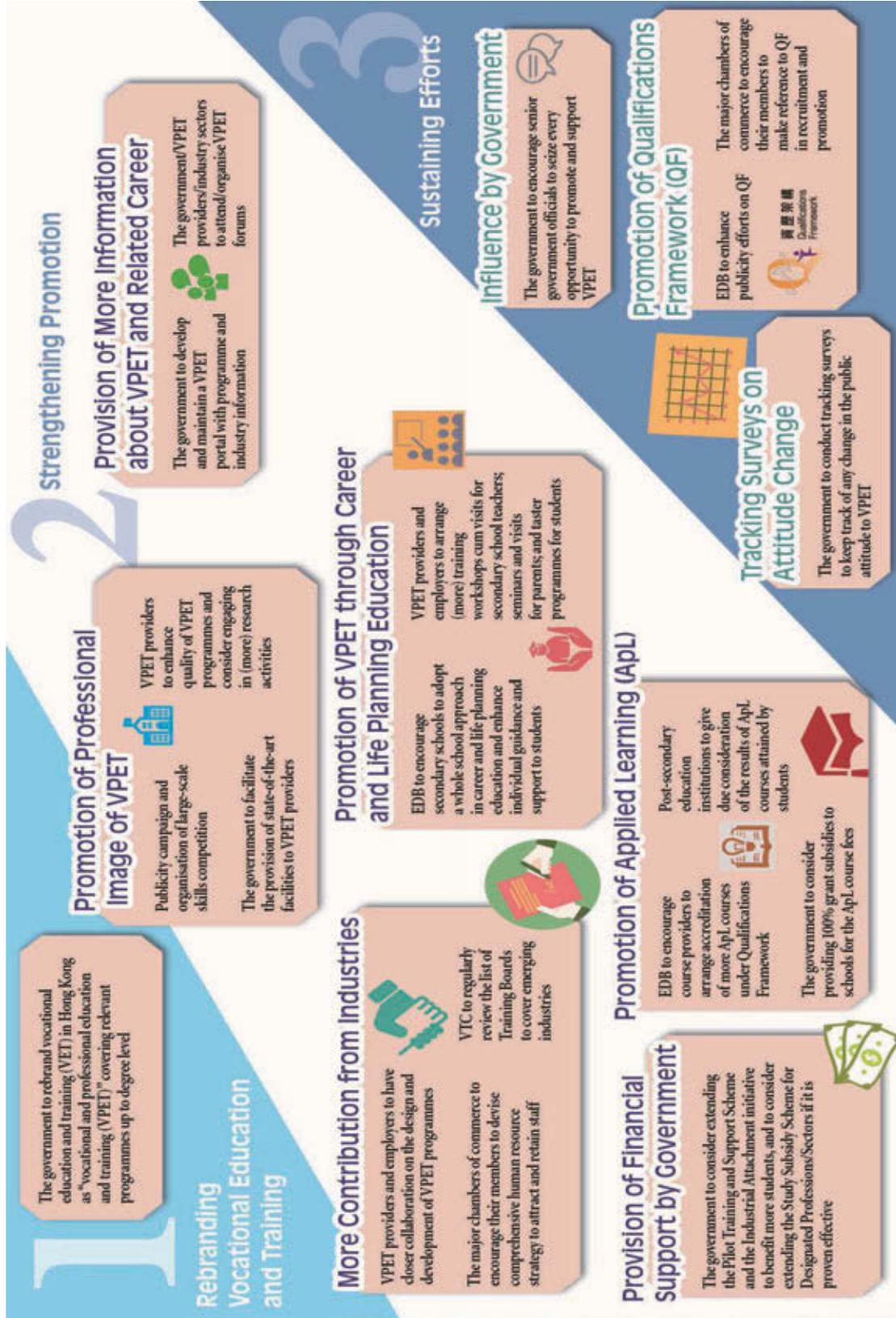


6.56 In order to review the effectiveness of the various measures to promote VPET after implementation, and to identify areas where the government and concerned parties may further improve to strengthen the promotion of VPET, **the Task Force recommends the government to conduct tracking surveys by involving relevant stakeholders to keep track of any changes in their attitude towards VPET.** The outcome of the tracking surveys should provide an objective measurement of the success of the various measures. A benchmarking study should be conducted before the implementation of the various measures to facilitate comparison of any changes in perception of VPET in due course.

Summary

6.57 To better present all recommendations proposed by the Task Force, they are summarised in the chart on the next page.

Chart 6.1 Summary of recommendations



Annex A

Summary of Findings from Focus Group Interviews

Background

The Task Force, through a consultant, conducted 11 focus group interviews in July and August 2014 with a view to measuring the perception on VET of different groups of stakeholders and identifying effective means to promote VET. A total of 74 respondents were engaged in the focus group interviews. They included students from Secondary 2 to 6 of different local secondary schools, VET students and graduates from different providers, parents of secondary school students, parents of VET students and graduates, secondary school teachers including career masters/mistresses and vice school head, school heads of local secondary schools, representatives of VET providers including labour unions, as well as employers of VET graduates.

Findings

2. In each interview, a moderator would facilitate free and active expression of views by stakeholders on the issues in relation to VET by open-ended questions. A summary of the findings is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

(a) Perception and Awareness of VET

3. VET was perceived as strongly associated with training of vocational skills. It was practical and specific for particular industries, and was perceived as less academically focused and more suitable for students who were not eligible for university education. Nonetheless, VET was perceived to be effective in helping students with interests in particular industries to develop their career path. There was abundant information on the Internet about VET but the information was scattered and not organised, rendering any comparison difficult. The articulation pathways of VET for further studies and future career were also perceived as unclear to some secondary school students and their parents.

(b) Current Acceptance of VET

4. At present, most VET-related information was delivered by VET providers. Some secondary school student respondents and parent respondents cast doubt on the creditability of the information. More public confidence could be instilled should the information be disseminated by the government. Recognition by employers and the government was also essential for wider acceptance of VET, alongside competitiveness of VET graduates in further studies and the job market.

(c) Factors of Consideration for Pursuing VET

5. Personal interests, academic results/ learning capability, future career prospects and teaching quality of VET programmes were the key consideration factors. Some parent respondents remarked that VET had boosted up the confidence level of their children and had a positive impact on their personal development. Some also perceived VET as practical programmes with flexible learning mode. The parent respondents were supportive should their children were determined to pursue VET. However, some of them were reluctant to encourage their children to pursue VET given the perception of VET leading to a lower qualification and lesser competitiveness in future career pursuit. Some considered it necessary to uplift the professional image of VET-related industries and suggested further promotion of QF to support the professional recognition of VET qualifications.

(d) Recommendations on Promotion of VET

6. Overall, stakeholders looked for a clear positioning and definition of VET. Some secondary school student respondents and parent respondents considered that the word “training” implied a lower qualification. A more professional image of VET should be established and the perception that VET was mainly for students not eligible for university education should be changed. Instead, VET should be emphasised as a valued choice for students based on their interest and preference. In order to enhance credibility and ensure standardised and impartial information be disseminated, VET should be promoted by the government, which could also demonstrate its recognition to VET programmes. The promotion should also come with concrete and realistic information such as the campus life of VET students and their learning mode, future prospects of graduates and employment situation as well as the success stories of VET graduates in different disciplines.



7. Direct communication with VET teachers and students was preferred by secondary school students in acquiring respective information. It was also important to arouse the students' career aspiration since junior secondary level with authentic workplace experience, taster programmes, competitions, etc. The VET pathways should be included in the career and life planning education in secondary schools. Parents' education of the values of VET with the provision of more information was equally important.

Annex B

(1) Questionnaire on Secondary School Students' Perception of VET in Hong Kong

A. General Information

A1 Gender
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Male [46%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Female [54%]
A2 Year of Study
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Proceeding to Secondary 4 in September 2014 [16%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Proceeding to Secondary 5 in September 2014 [32%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Proceeding to Secondary 6 in September 2014 [52%]

B. Attitudes and Knowledge towards VET

B1 Do you know the career pathways and further study opportunities of VET programmes (such as Higher Diploma programmes, apprenticeship programmes and some diploma/certificate programmes with a high percentage of the curriculum consisting of specialized contents (e.g. learning related to disciplines, professions and vocational skills)) in Hong Kong?
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Yes [51%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. No [16%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Not sure [33%]
B2 Compared to general secondary or higher education, do you think that it is easier or more difficult to be admitted to pursue VET programmes?
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Much easier [7%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Slightly easier [50%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Slightly more difficult [19%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Much more difficult [3%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. No difference [6%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. No comment [16%]

B3 Do you think that people who completed VET are more likely or less likely to find a job than people who completed their general secondary or higher education?

- 1. More likely [34%]
- 2. Less likely [32%]
- 3. No difference [19%]
- 4. No comment [15%]

**B4 Do you agree with the following statement about VET?
(Please indicate “Y” for agree, “N” for not agree, “ / ” for don’t know)**

- ___ 1. VET offers good career prospects.
[Agree: 50%; Disagree: 19%; Don’t know: 31%]
- ___ 2. VET graduates may earn as much as graduates of degree programmes.
[Agree: 23%; Disagree: 44%; Don’t know: 33%]
- ___ 3. People with VET qualifications will better meet the development needs of Hong Kong. [Agree: 42%; Disagree: 24%; Don’t know: 35%]
- ___ 4. VET will help improve the skills of the workforce, and therefore help reduce unemployment in Hong Kong.
[Agree: 61%; Disagree: 15%; Don’t know: 24%]
- ___ 5. Secondary school students receive sufficient advice on VET opportunities from their teachers/guidance counselors.
[Agree: 52%; Disagree: 17%; Don’t know: 31%]

B5 Overall speaking, do you think that VET has a very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative or very negative image in Hong Kong?

- 1. Very positive [7%]
- 2. Fairly positive [54%]
- 3. Fairly negative [19%]
- 4. Very negative [2%]
- 5. No comment [17%]

C. Further Education Choices

C1	Which of the following further education opportunities will you consider after leaving secondary school? (You can select more than one box) <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Degree [70%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Higher Diploma [44%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Associate Degree [29%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Foundation Diploma [9%] <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Yi Jin Diploma [8%] <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Apprenticeship Programme [9%] <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Other diploma/certificate programmes on VET [12%] <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Others (Please specify: _____) [4%] <input type="checkbox"/> 9. I do not plan to pursue further study [6%]
C2	Did any of the following people offer advice to you on planning your educational path after leaving secondary school? (You can select more than one box) <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Parents/someone from my family [75%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. A friend/schoolmate [57%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. A teacher [75%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. A guidance counselor [17%] <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Headmaster [5%] <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Someone from the world of work [22%] <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Others (Please specify: _____) [2%] <input type="checkbox"/> 8. No one [7%]
C3	Which of the following sources of information, if any, have you used or are you using to plan your educational path after leaving secondary school? (You can select more than one box) <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Television [44%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Internet and online social networks [70%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Newspapers [29%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Radio [9%] <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Events (e.g. skills competition/open day/visit to institution) [36%] <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Exhibitions/education fairs [30%] <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Schools (teachers, guidance counselors) [67%] <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Family [34%] <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Friends/schoolmates [39%] <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Experience in summer or part-time jobs [11%]

- 11. Others (Please specify: _____) [1%]
- 12. None [4%]
- 13. I do not plan to pursue further study [3%]

C4 Would you consider pursuing VET in future?

- 1. Yes (please answer Questions C5 and C6) [23%]
- 2. No (please answer Question C7) [34%]
- 3. Not yet decided (please answer Questions C5, C6 and C7) [44%]

C5 Why would you consider pursuing VET in future?

(You can select more than one box)

- 1. Satisfactory academic results allowing me to pursue VET [20%]
- 2. Unsatisfactory academic results preventing me to pursue other education opportunities [32%]
- 3. Good chance of articulating to degree programmes after completing VET [17%]
- 4. Interest in VET and related career [20%]
- 5. High quality of VET programmes [6%]
- 6. Adequate and state-of-the-art facilities of VET providers [5%]
- 7. Professional education and recognition [22%]
- 8. Positive image of VET and related career with high social status [5%]
- 9. Easy to secure job after graduation [17%]
- 10. Satisfactory salaries expected after graduation [6%]
- 11. Less expensive tuition fees [7%]
- 12. Family traditional occupation [2%]
- 13. Wish to start up my own business [7%]
- 14. Support from parents/family members [9%]
- 15. Support from teacher/guidance counselor [5%]
- 16. Support from friend/schoolmate [5%]
- 17. Lots of information about VET [6%]
- 18. Others (Please specify: _____) [0%]
- 19. Don't know [4%]

C6 If you plan to pursue VET in due course, which of the following factors are important for you? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Distance of the VET provider from my place of living [13%]
- 2. Costs (including study costs and living expenses) [35%]
- 3. Image of the VET provider [14%]
- 4. Personal interest in the subject [43%]

- 5. Future employment opportunities [42%]
- 6. Length of studies [7%]

**C7 Why would you NOT consider pursuing VET in future?
(You can select more than one box)**

- 1. Unsatisfactory academic results preventing me to pursue VET [10%]
- 2. Satisfactory academic results allowing me to pursue other education opportunities [31%]
- 3. Slim chance of articulating to degree programmes after completing VET [17%]
- 4. Lack of interest in VET and related career [18%]
- 5. Low quality of VET programmes [14%]
- 6. Inadequate and outdated facilities of VET providers [5%]
- 7. Negative image of VET and related career with low social status [15%]
- 8. Not easy to secure job after graduation [21%]
- 9. Unsatisfactory salaries expected after graduation [19%]
- 10. More expensive tuition fees [20%]
- 11. Lack of support/objection from parents/family members [12%]
- 12. Lack of support/objection from teacher/guidance counselor [3%]
- 13. Lack of support/objection from friend/schoolmate [3%]
- 14. Insufficient information about VET [9%]
- 15. Others (Please specify: _____) [1%]
- 16. Don't know [11%]

D. Promotion of VET

D1 Are you interested in learning more about VET?

- 1. Yes [54%]
- 2. No [22%]
- 3. Don't know [24%]

**D2 What can be done to better promote VET in Hong Kong?
(You can select AT MOST 5 boxes based on their relative importance)**

Publicity and information

- 1. More advertisement [33%]
- 2. More talks/exhibitions on VET programmes [42%]
- 3. Parent education so that they would support their children to pursue VET [25%]

- 4. More support for secondary school students from teachers/guidance counsellors [40%]
- 5. More information about VET [27%]

VET providers

- 6. Better facilities and more resources [48%]
- 7. Better teaching quality [39%]
- 8. Better management [15%]
- 9. Closer alignment with the industries [41%]

Incentives to VET students

- 10. Allowances/study subsidy provided by government/industries [48%]
- 11. More industrial attachments/internship opportunities for VET students [38%]
- 12. Better opportunities for articulation to degree level education [32%]
- 13. More job opportunities for VET graduates [37%]
- 14. Higher salaries for VET graduates [28%]
- 15. Clearer career paths for VET graduates in different industries [16%]
- 16. Others (Please specify: _____) [0%]
- 17. Don't know [7%]

(2) Questionnaire on the Perception of VET in Hong Kong of Parents with Children Studying in Secondary Schools

A. General Information

A1 Gender <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Male [26%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Female [74%]
A2 Age Group <input type="checkbox"/> 1. 30 or below [0%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. 30-39 [2%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. 40-49 [52%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. 50-59 [43%] <input type="checkbox"/> 5. 60 or above [4%]
A3 What is your highest education level attained? <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Doctorate Degree [6%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Master Degree [2%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Bachelor's Degree [13%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Higher Diploma/Associate Degree [9%] <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Diploma/Certificate programmes [15%] <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Apprenticeship training [2%] <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Secondary school [46%] <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Primary school [6%] <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Others (Please specify: _____) [2%] <input type="checkbox"/> 10. None [0%]
A4. Do you have any children currently pursuing VET (such as Higher Diploma programmes, apprenticeship programmes and some diploma/certificate programmes with a high percentage of the curriculum consisting of specialized contents (e.g. learning related to disciplines, professions and vocational skills) or graduated from VET programmes? <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Yes [31%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. No [69%]

B. Attitudes and Knowledge towards VET

B1	Do you know the career pathways and further study opportunities of VET programmes in Hong Kong? <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Yes [72%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. No [11%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Not sure [17%]
B2	Compared to general secondary or higher education, do you think that it is easier or more difficult for your child(ren) to be admitted to pursue VET programmes? <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Much easier [19%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Slightly easier [59%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Slightly more difficult [11%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Much more difficult [2%] <input type="checkbox"/> 5. No difference [2%] <input type="checkbox"/> 6. No comment [7%]
B3	Do you think that people who completed VET are more likely or less likely to find a job than people who completed their general secondary or higher education? <input type="checkbox"/> 1. More likely [41%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Less likely [31%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. No difference [20%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. No comment [7%]
B4	Do you agree with the following statement about VET? (Please indicate “Y” for agree, “N” for not agree, “ / ” for don’t know) <input type="checkbox"/> 1. VET offers good career prospects. [Agree: 56%; Disagree: 22%; Don’t know: 22%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. VET graduates may earn as much as graduates of degree programmes. [Agree: 20%; Disagree: 57%; Don’t know: 22%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. People with VET qualifications will better meet the development needs of Hong Kong. [Agree: 65%; Disagree: 11%; Don’t know: 24%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. VET will help improve the skills of the workforce, and therefore help reduce unemployment in Hong Kong. [Agree: 72%; Disagree: 9%; Don’t know: 19%] <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Secondary school students receive sufficient advice on VET opportunities from their teachers/guidance counselors. [Agree: 48%; Disagree: 31%; Don’t know: 20%]

B5 Overall speaking, do you think that VET has a very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative or very negative image in Hong Kong?

- 1. Very positive [19%]
- 2. Fairly positive [59%]
- 3. Fairly negative [9%]
- 4. Very negative [0%]
- 5. No comment [13%]

C. Further Education Choices

C1 If you are now providing guidance on the education opportunities to your child(ren) after leaving secondary school, which of the following study opportunities may you suggest to your child(ren)? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Degree [58%]
- 2. Higher Diploma [41%]
- 3. Associate Degree [20%]
- 4. Foundation Diploma [11%]
- 5. Yi Jin Diploma [6%]
- 6. Apprenticeship Programme [6%]
- 7. Other diploma/certificate programmes on VET [18%]
- 8. Others (Please specify: _____) [0%]
- 9. My child(ren) do(es) not plan to pursue further study [3%]

C2 Which of the following sources, if any, have you used or are you using to obtain information for advising your child(ren) on education opportunities after leaving secondary school? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Television [31%]
- 2. Internet and online social networks [39%]
- 3. Newspapers [50%]
- 4. Radio [24%]
- 5. Events (e.g. skills competition/open day/visit to institution) [33%]
- 6. Exhibitions/education fairs [54%]
- 7. My child(ren)'s school (teachers, guidance counselors) [50%]
- 8. Family/relatives [19%]
- 9. Friends [28%]
- 10. My own working experience and connection [33%]
- 11. Others (Please specify: _____) [2%]

- 12. None [0%]
- 13. My child(ren) do(es) not plan to pursue further study [4%]

C3 Would you consider advising your child(ren) to pursue VET in future?

- 1. Yes (please answer Questions C4) [43%]
- 2. No (please answer Question C5) [28%]
- 3. Not yet decided (please answer Questions C4 and C5) [30%]

C4 Why would you consider advising your child(ren) to pursue VET in future? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Satisfactory academic results allowing them/him/her to pursue VET [19%]
- 2. Unsatisfactory academic results preventing them/him/her to pursue other education opportunities [28%]
- 3. Good chance of articulating to degree programmes after completing VET [19%]
- 4. Their/his/her interest in VET and related career [30%]
- 5. High quality of VET programmes [9%]
- 6. Adequate and state-of-the-art facilities of VET providers [9%]
- 7. Professional education and recognition [33%]
- 8. Positive image of VET and related career with high social status [9%]
- 9. Easy to secure job after graduation [15%]
- 10. Satisfactory salaries expected after graduation [4%]
- 11. Less expensive tuition fees [2%]
- 12. Family traditional occupation [4%]
- 13. Their/his/her wish to start up own business [0%]
- 14. Support from their/his/her teacher/guidance counselor [2%]
- 15. Support from their/his/her friends/schoolmates [4%]
- 16. Lots of information about VET [2%]
- 17. Others (Please specify: _____) [0%]
- 18. Don't know [6%]

C5 Why would you NOT consider advising your child(ren) to pursue VET in future? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Unsatisfactory academic results preventing them/him/her to pursue VET [11%]
- 2. Satisfactory academic results allowing them/him/her to pursue other education opportunities [33%]
- 3. Slim chance of articulating to degree programmes after completing VET [15%]
- 4. Their/his/her lack of interest in VET and related career [13%]

- 5. Low quality of VET programmes [9%]
- 6. Inadequate and outdated facilities of VET providers [4%]
- 7. Negative image of VET and related career with low social status [13%]
- 8. Not easy to secure job after graduation [4%]
- 9. Unsatisfactory salaries expected after graduation [15%]
- 10. More expensive tuition fees [2%]
- 11. Lack of support/objection from their/his/her teacher/guidance counselor [4%]
- 12. Lack of support/objection from their/his/her friends/schoolmates [0%]
- 13. Insufficient information about VET [4%]
- 14. Others (Please specify: _____) [0%]
- 15. Don't know [11%]

C6 If your child(ren) plan(s) to pursue VET in due course, which of the following factors do you think are important? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Distance of the VET provider from place of living [17%]
- 2. Costs (including study costs and living expenses) [33%]
- 3. Image of the VET provider [26%]
- 4. Their/his/her personal interest in the subject [46%]
- 5. Future employment opportunities [61%]
- 6. Length of studies [17%]

D. Promotion of VET

D1 **Are you interested in learning more about VET?**

- 1. Yes [72%]
- 2. No [20%]
- 3. Don't know [7%]

D2 **What can be done to better promote VET in Hong Kong?**
(You can select **AT MOST 5 boxes** based on their relative importance)

Publicity and information

- 1. More advertisement [6%]
- 2. More talks/exhibitions on VET programmes [41%]
- 3. Parent education so that they would support their children to pursue VET [33%]
- 4. More support for secondary school students from teachers/guidance counsellors [43%]

- 5. More information about VET [41%]

VET providers

- 6. Better facilities and more resources [56%]
- 7. Better teaching quality [44%]
- 8. Better management [20%]
- 9. Closer alignment with the industries [50%]

Incentives to VET students

- 10. Allowances/study subsidy provided by government/industries [32%]
- 11. More industrial attachments/internship opportunities for VET students [30%]
- 12. Better opportunities for articulation to degree level education [46%]
- 13. More job opportunities for VET graduates [44%]
- 14. Higher salaries for VET graduates [24%]
- 15. Clearer career paths for VET graduates in different industries [32%]
- 16. Others (Please specify: _____) [0%]
- 17. Don't know [2%]

(3) Questionnaire on Secondary School Teachers' Perception of VET in Hong Kong

A. General Information

A1 Gender
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Male [32%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Female [68%]
A2 Year of service in secondary school(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. 0 – 1 year [2%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. 2 – 5 years [14%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. 6 – 10 years [25%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Over 10 years [59%]
A3. Are you responsible for career and articulation guidance in your school?
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Yes [91%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. No [9%]

B. Attitudes and Knowledge towards VET

B1 Do you know the career pathways and further study opportunities of VET programmes (such as Higher Diploma programmes, apprenticeship programmes and some diploma/certificate programmes with a high percentage of the curriculum consisting of specialized contents (e.g. learning related to disciplines, professions and vocational skills), etc.) in Hong Kong?
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Yes [82%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. No [5%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Not sure [13%]
B2 Compared to general secondary or higher education, do you think that it is easier or more difficult for your students to be admitted to pursue VET programmes?
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Much easier [21%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Slightly easier [52%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Slightly more difficult [7%]
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Much more difficult [7%]

- 5. No difference [11%]
- 6. No comment [2%]

B3 Do you think that people who completed VET are more likely or less likely to find a job than people who completed their general secondary or higher education?

- 1. More likely [57%]
- 2. Less likely [5%]
- 3. No difference [20%]
- 4. No comment [18%]

**B4 Do you agree with the following statement about VET?
(Please indicate “Y” for agree, “N” for not agree, “ / ” for don’t know)**

- ___ 1. VET offers good career prospects.
[Agree: 70%; Disagree: 18%; Don’t know: 12%]
- ___ 2. VET graduates may earn as much as graduates of degree programmes.
[Agree: 27%; Disagree: 48%; Don’t know: 25%]
- ___ 3. People with VET qualifications will better meet the development needs of Hong Kong. [Agree: 74%; Disagree: 14%; Don’t know: 13%]
- ___ 4. VET will help improve the skills of the workforce, and therefore help reduce unemployment in Hong Kong.
[Agree: 93%; Disagree: 5%; Don’t know: 2%]
- ___ 5. Secondary school students receive sufficient advice on VET opportunities from their teachers/guidance counselors.
[Agree: 41%; Disagree: 41%; Don’t know: 12%]

B5 Overall speaking, do you think that VET has a very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative or very negative image in Hong Kong?

- 1. Very positive [5%]
- 2. Fairly positive [32%]
- 3. Fairly negative [50%]
- 4. Very negative [7%]
- 5. No comment [5%]

C. Further Education Choices

C1 If you are now providing guidance on the education opportunities to your students after leaving secondary school, which of the following study opportunities may you suggest to your students? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Degree [91%]
- 2. Higher Diploma [95%]
- 3. Associate Degree [75%]
- 4. Foundation Diploma [48%]
- 5. Yi Jin Diploma [30%]
- 6. Apprenticeship Programme [32%]
- 7. Other diploma/certificate programmes on VET [52%]
- 8. Others (Please specify: _____) [7%]
- 9. My students do not plan to pursue further study [2%]

C2 Which of the following sources, if any, have you used or are you using to obtain information for advising your students on education opportunities after leaving secondary school? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Television [41%]
- 2. Internet and online social networks [88%]
- 3. Newspapers [68%]
- 4. Radio [20%]
- 5. Events (e.g. skills competition/open day/visit to institution) [75%]
- 6. Exhibitions/education fairs [75%]
- 7. Other teachers/guidance counselors [66%]
- 8. Family/relatives [16%]
- 9. Friends [32%]
- 10. My own working experience and connection before joining the teaching profession [61%]
- 11. Others (Please specify: _____) [2%]
- 12. None [2%]
- 13. My students do not plan to pursue further study [2%]

C3 Would you consider advising some of your students to pursue VET in future?

- 1. Yes (please answer Questions C4) [82%]
- 2. No (please answer Question C5) [4%]
- 3. Not yet decided (please answer Questions C4 and C5) [14%]

C4 Why would you consider advising some of your students to pursue VET in future? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Their satisfactory academic results allowing them to pursue VET [46%]
- 2. Their unsatisfactory academic results preventing them to pursue other education opportunities [77%]
- 3. Good chance of articulating to degree programmes after completing VET [39%]
- 4. Their interest in VET and related career [71%]
- 5. High quality of VET programmes [23%]
- 6. Adequate and state-of-the-art facilities of VET providers [18%]
- 7. Professional education and recognition [64%]
- 8. Positive image of VET and related career with high social status [16%]
- 9. Easy to secure job after graduation [59%]
- 10. Satisfactory salaries expected after graduation [23%]
- 11. Less expensive tuition fees [18%]
- 12. Their family traditional occupation [7%]
- 13. Their wish to start up own business [4%]
- 14. Support from their parents/family members [21%]
- 15. Support from their friends/schoolmates [4%]
- 16. Lots of information about VET [18%]
- 17. Others (Please specify: _____) [2%]
- 18. Don't know [0%]

C5 Why would you NOT consider advising some of your students to pursue VET in future? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Their unsatisfactory academic results preventing them to pursue VET [11%]
- 2. Their satisfactory academic results allowing them to pursue other education opportunities [43%]
- 3. Slim chance of articulating to degree programmes after completing VET [16%]
- 4. Their lack of interest in VET and related career [30%]
- 5. Low quality of VET programmes [13%]
- 6. Inadequate and outdated facilities of VET providers [7%]
- 7. Negative image of VET and related career with low social status [23%]
- 8. Not easy to secure job after graduation [7%]
- 9. Unsatisfactory salaries expected after graduation [13%]
- 10. More expensive tuition fees [9%]
- 11. Lack of support/objection from their parents/family members [27%]
- 12. Lack of support/objection from their friends/schoolmates [11%]

- 13. Insufficient information about VET [18%]
- 14. Others (Please specify: _____) [5%]
- 15. Don't know [0%]

C6 If some of your students plan to pursue VET in due course, which of the following factors do you think are important? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Distance of the VET provider from their place of living [13%]
- 2. Costs (including study costs and living expenses) [54%]
- 3. Image of the VET provider [64%]
- 4. Their personal interest in the subject [88%]
- 5. Future employment opportunities [89%]
- 6. Length of studies [27%]

D. Promotion of VET

D1 Are you interested in learning more about VET?

- 1. Yes [93%]
- 2. No [5%]
- 3. Don't know [2%]

D2 What can be done to better promote VET in Hong Kong? (You can select AT MOST 5 boxes based on their relative importance)

Publicity and information

- 1. More advertisement [14%]
- 2. More talks/exhibitions on VET programmes [59%]
- 3. Parent education so that they would support their children to pursue VET [64%]
- 4. More support for secondary school students from teachers/guidance counsellors [71%]
- 5. More information about VET [63%]

VET providers

- 6. Better facilities and more resources [32%]
- 7. Better teaching quality [43%]
- 8. Better management [18%]
- 9. Closer alignment with the industries [71%]



Incentives to VET students

- 10. Allowances/study subsidy provided by government/industries [54%]
- 11. More industrial attachments/internship opportunities for VET students [71%]
- 12. Better opportunities for articulation to degree level education [59%]
- 13. More job opportunities for VET graduates [71%]
- 14. Higher salaries for VET graduates [34%]
- 15. Clearer career paths for VET graduates in different industries [61%]
- 16. Others (Please specify: _____) [5%]
- 17. Don't know [2%]

(4) Questionnaire on the Perception of Students Pursuing VET and VET Graduates in Hong Kong

A. General Information

A1	Gender* <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Male [57%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Female [32%]
A2.	Age Group <input type="checkbox"/> 1. 14-18 [2%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. 19-24 [85%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. 25-29 [10%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. 30-39 [3%] <input type="checkbox"/> 5. 40-49 [1%] <input type="checkbox"/> 6. 50+ [0%]
A3	Are you currently pursuing VET or a VET graduate? <input type="checkbox"/> 1. I am currently pursuing VET [75%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. I am a VET graduate [24%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Others (Please specify: _____) [1%]
A4	For VET students, what is the level of the VET programme you are currently pursuing? <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Bachelor's Degree [6%] <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Higher Diploma [59%] <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Foundation Diploma [5%] <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Apprenticeship training [13%] <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Other diploma/certificate programmes on VET [15%] <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Others (Please specify: _____) [3%]

* 10% respondents did not indicate their gender in the survey.

A5 For VET graduates, what is your highest education level attained?

- 1. Doctorate Degree [0%]
- 2. Master Degree [0%]
- 3. Bachelor's Degree [12%]
- 4. Higher Diploma [31%]
- 5. Foundation Diploma [25%]
- 6. Apprenticeship training [9%]
- 7. Other diploma/certificate programmes on VET [17%]
- 8. Others (Please specify: _____) [7%]

A6 What is/was your major field of study?

- 1. Construction [16%]
- 2. Services (e.g. hairdressing, hospitality) [13%]
- 3. IT/Computer [9%]
- 4. Catering [4%]
- 5. Car service/drivers [0%]
- 6. Garments/textile/leather/wool/handmade souvenirs [0%]
- 7. Mechanical/building services [3%]
- 8. Electrical/electronic industry [2%]
- 9. Art/design [9%]
- 10. Language [0%]
- 11. Business administration (e.g. accounting, logistics, secretary) [13%]
- 12. Music [0%]
- 13. Nursing [0%]
- 14. Child education/care [7%]
- 15. Applied science [8%]
- 16. Others (Please specify: _____) [17%]

B. Attitudes and Knowledge towards VET

B1 Compared to general secondary or higher education, do you think that it is easier or more difficult to be admitted to pursue VET programmes?

- 1. Much easier [10%]
- 2. Slightly easier [58%]
- 3. Slightly more difficult [14%]
- 4. Much more difficult [0%]
- 5. No difference [13%]

6. No comment [5%]

B2 Do you think that people who completed VET are more likely or less likely to find a job than people who completed their general secondary or higher education?

- 1. More likely [69%]
- 2. Less likely [6%]
- 3. No difference [18%]
- 4. No comment [7%]

**B3 Do you agree with the following statement about VET?
(Please indicate “Y” for agree, “N” for not agree, “ / ” for don’t know)**

- ___ 1. VET offers good career prospects.
[Agree: 82%; Disagree: 8%; Don’t know: 10%]
- ___ 2. VET graduates may earn as much as graduates of degree programmes.
[Agree: 38%; Disagree: 43%; Don’t know: 18%]
- ___ 3. People with VET qualifications will better meet the development needs of Hong Kong. [Agree: 71%; Disagree: 14%; Don’t know: 16%]
- ___ 4. VET will help improve the skills of the workforce, and therefore help reduce unemployment in Hong Kong.
[Agree: 77%; Disagree: 14%; Don’t know: 8%]
- ___ 5. Secondary school students receive sufficient advice on VET opportunities from their teachers/guidance counselors.
[Agree: 57%; Disagree: 27%; Don’t know: 16%]

B4 Overall speaking, do you think that VET has a very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative or very negative image in Hong Kong?

- 1. Very positive [7%]
- 2. Fairly positive [69%]
- 3. Fairly negative [15%]
- 4. Very negative [2%]
- 5. No comment [8%]

C. Education Choices

C1 Which of the following sources of information, if any, did you use to plan your educational path after leaving secondary school? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Television [35%]
- 2. Internet and online social networks [68%]
- 3. Newspapers [26%]
- 4. Radio [8%]
- 5. Events (e.g. skills competition/open day/visit to institution) [31%]
- 6. Exhibitions/education fairs [27%]
- 7. Schools (teachers, guidance counselors) [53%]
- 8. Family [20%]
- 9. Friends/schoolmates [55%]
- 10. Experience in summer or part-time jobs [11%]
- 11. Others (Please specify: _____) [1%]
- 12. None [2%]

C2 Did any of the following people offer advice to you on planning your educational path after leaving secondary school? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Parents/someone from my family [53%]
- 2. A friend/schoolmate [62%]
- 3. A teacher [51%]
- 4. A guidance counselor [17%]
- 5. Headmaster [4%]
- 6. Someone from the world of work [26%]
- 7. Others (Please specify: _____) [1%]
- 8. No one [14%]

C3 Did you face any objection from the people below when you decided to pursue VET? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Parents/family members [11%]
- 2. Teacher/guidance counselor [1%]
- 3. Friend/schoolmate [5%]
- 4. Others (Please specify: _____) [1%]
- 5. No one [85%]



C4 Why did you choose to pursue VET? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Satisfactory academic results allowing me to pursue VET [50%]
- 2. Unsatisfactory academic results preventing me to pursue other education opportunities [47%]
- 3. Good chance of articulating to degree programmes after completing VET [30%]
- 4. Interest in VET and related career [59%]
- 5. High quality of VET programmes [32%]
- 6. Adequate and state-of-the-art facilities of VET providers [33%]
- 7. Professional education and recognition [52%]
- 8. Positive image of VET and related career with high social status [26%]
- 9. Easy to secure job after graduation [65%]
- 10. Satisfactory salaries expected after graduation [31%]
- 11. Less expensive tuition fees [23%]
- 12. Family traditional occupation [7%]
- 13. Wish to start up my own business [14%]
- 14. Support from parents/family members [33%]
- 15. Support from teacher/guidance counselor [21%]
- 16. Support from friend/schoolmate [27%]
- 17. Lots of information about VET [26%]
- 18. Others (Please specify: _____) [3%]
- 19. Don't know [1%]

C5 When you decided to pursue VET, which of the following factors are important for you? (You can select more than one box)

- 1. Distance of the VET provider from my place of living [18%]
- 2. Costs (including study costs and living expenses) [43%]
- 3. Image of the VET provider [34%]
- 4. Personal interest in the subject [73%]
- 5. Future employment opportunities [74%]
- 6. Length of studies [37%]

C6 How would you rate the quality of teaching and resources at your VET provider?

- 1. Very good [6%]
- 2. Good [54%]
- 3. Average [34%]
- 4. Poor [4%]



- 5. Very Poor [0%]
- 6. No comment [2%]

C7 For students still pursuing VET, how do you think your chances for employment will be after completing VET?

- 1. It will be easy to get a job [43%]
- 2. It will not be too difficult to get a job, though not easy [41%]
- 3. It will be difficult to get a job [4%]
- 4. Don't know [12%]

C8 For VET graduates, how do you describe your chances for employment when completing VET?

- 1. It was easy to get a job [44%]
- 2. It was not too difficult to get a job, though not easy [30%]
- 3. It was difficult to get a job [5%]
- 4. No comment [21%]

D. Promotion of VET

D1 Do you think there is a need to better promote VET in Hong Kong?

- 1. Yes [84%]
- 2. No [9%]
- 3. Don't know [7%]

**D2 What can be done to better promote VET in Hong Kong?
(You can select AT MOST 5 boxes based on their relative importance)**

Publicity and information

- 1. More advertisement [25%]
- 2. More talks/exhibitions on VET programmes [35%]
- 3. Parent education so that they would support their children to pursue VET [19%]
- 4. More support for secondary school students from teachers/guidance counsellors [31%]
- 5. More information about VET [24%]

VET providers

- 6. Better facilities and more resources [37%]
- 7. Improvement in teaching quality in terms of the technology being used [15%]
- 8. Improvement in teaching quality in terms of teaching pedagogy [14%]

- 8. Improvement in teaching quality in terms of the professional level of teaching staff [18%]
- 9. Better management [11%]
- 10. Closer alignment with the industries [34%]

Incentives to VET students

- 11. Allowances/study subsidy provided by government/industries [54%]
- 12. More industrial attachments/internship opportunities for VET students [54%]
- 13. Better opportunities for articulation to degree level education [36%]
- 14. More job opportunities for VET graduates [53%]
- 15. Higher salaries for VET graduates [36%]
- 16. Clearer career paths for VET graduates in different industries [21%]
- 17. Others (Please specify: _____) [3%]
- 18. Don't know [3%]

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List of Abbreviations

AD	Associate Degree
API	Announcement in Public Interest
ApL	Applied Learning
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ATA	Apprenticeship Training Agency
BSPP	Business-School Partnership Programme
CCTI	Chinese Cuisine Training Institute
CCTS	Contractors Cooperative Training Scheme
CE	Chief Executive
CGS	Career Guidance Section
CGT	Career Guidance Team
CIC	Construction Industry Council
CITA	Clothing Industry Training Authority
DEVB	Development Bureau
EDB	Education Bureau
E&M	Electrical and Mechanical
EMSD	Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

ERB	Employees Retraining Board
FD	Foundation Diploma
FVB	Federal Vocational Baccalaureate
GHMC	Guangzhou / Hong Kong/ Macao / Chengdu
HD	Higher Diploma
HKDSE	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
IA	Industrial Attachment
ITE	Institute of Technical Education
ITACs	Industry Training Advisory Committees
MATF	Maritime and Aviation Training Fund
MP 2022	Report on Manpower Projection to 2022
NSNL	National Skills Needs List
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OJT	On-The-Job Training
PET	Professional education and training
Pilot Scheme	Pilot Training and Support Scheme
QF	Qualifications Framework

QF Fund	Qualifications Framework Fund
Retail Earn & Learn Pilot Scheme	Earn & Learn Pilot Scheme for the Retail Industry
RTOs	Registered Training Organisations
SCPP	Steering Committee on Population Policy
SCSs	Specification of Competency Standards
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SSSDP	Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
Task Force	Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education
THEi	Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VET	Vocational education and training
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools
VPET	Vocational and professional education and training
VTC	Vocational Training Council
YJD	Yi Jin Diploma

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