

# New round of application under Quality Enhancement Support Scheme opens

The Education Bureau announced today (November 2) the 2018/19 round of application for the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme (QESS) under the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund (SPEF).

As one of the major support measures to promote the healthy and sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary sector, the QESS was launched in November 2012 with the aim of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in the sector. The Scheme currently supports three project categories, namely theme-based, open-ended and industrial attachment projects.

All applications are considered by the independent QESS Sub-committee established under the SPEF Steering Committee. In the 2017/18 round of application, 11 out of 31 applications were approved with a total earmarked grant of about \$26.8 million. The approved projects aimed to enhance internship support, improve students' learning experience, enhance students' language proficiency and so forth.

The 2018/19 round of application invites proposals on projects to be launched in the 2019/20 academic year. For theme-based projects, applicants are allowed, as last year, to set their own themes as long as the proposals are collaborative in nature, i.e. proposed and undertaken by more than one eligible institution, to foster closer collaboration and synergy among institutions and benefit the sector as widely as possible.

For open-ended projects, applicants should submit applications within the scope of the QESS, which mainly includes the following:

- (1) improving the overall learning experience and language proficiency of students;
- (2) developing and improving teaching methodology and practices, including development of assessment strategies;
- (3) strengthening and improving quality assurance and related measures; and
- (4) enhancing student support and career guidance services, including support for non-Chinese speaking students and students with special educational needs.

For industrial attachment projects, applicants should submit proposals with the aim of increasing students' employability by sourcing more internship opportunities for post-secondary students, and/or enhancing relevant institutional support for students.

The deadline for the 2018/19 round of application is February 28, 2019. All non-profit-making education institutions offering full-time locally

accredited self-financing sub-degree or bachelor's degree (including top-up degree) programmes are eligible to apply. Other related bodies such as the federations of these education institutions and quality assurance agencies may also apply.

Further details about the QESS are available at the Concourse for Self-financing Post-secondary Education at [www.cspe.edu.hk/en/Overview-Measures-Fund-QESS.html](http://www.cspe.edu.hk/en/Overview-Measures-Fund-QESS.html).

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## [Update on latest MERS situation in Saudi Arabia](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 2) closely monitoring eight additional cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), including three deaths, reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) between September 17 and October 15, 2018, and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit.

According to the WHO, among the seven male patients and one female patient, aged 22 to 66, seven of them had underlying illnesses, two had contact with camels and consumed camel milk, and four had contact with previously confirmed patients.

According to the latest information, 2 262 cases have been reported to the WHO (with 803 deaths), including 2 043 in 10 Middle East countries comprising 1 884 in the KSA, 87 in the United Arab Emirates, 28 in Jordan, 19 in Qatar, 11 in Oman, six in Iran, four in Kuwait, two in Lebanon, and one each in Yemen and Bahrain.

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus," the spokesman said.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the





Big Wave Bay Beach\*

Silver Mine Bay Beach

\* Big Wave Bay Beach, Clear Water Bay Second Beach, Deep Water Bay Beach, Middle Bay Beach and Stanley Main Beach remain closed until further notice due to the severe damage brought about by Typhoon Mangkhut earlier.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality ([www.beachwq.gov.hk](http://www.beachwq.gov.hk) and [www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach)) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

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## [Land Registry releases statistics for October](#)

The Land Registry today (November 2) released its statistics for October 2018.

Land registration

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\* The number of sale and purchase agreements for all building units received for registration in October was 5,374 (+12.0 per cent compared with September but -23.9 per cent compared with October 2017)

\* The 12-month moving average for October was 7,247 (1.9 per cent below the 12-month moving average for September but 2.8 per cent above that for October 2017)

\* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in October was \$45.5 billion (+0.1 per cent compared with September but -15.1 per cent compared with October 2017)

\* Among the sale and purchase agreements, 4,243 were for residential units (+21.2 per cent compared with September but -19.8 per cent compared with October 2017)

\* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in respect of residential units was \$38.6 billion (+4.0 per cent compared with September but -7.9 per cent compared with October 2017)

Statistics on sales of residential units do not include sale and purchase agreements relating to sales of units under the Home Ownership Scheme, the Private Sector Participation Scheme and the Tenants Purchase Scheme unless the premium of the unit concerned has been paid after the sale restriction period.

Figures on sale and purchase agreements received for the past 12 months, the year-on-year rate of change and breakdown figures on residential sales have also been released.

As deeds may not be lodged with the Land Registry until up to 30 days after the transaction, these statistics generally relate to land transactions in the previous month.

Land search

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\* The number of searches of land registers made by the public in October was 445,881 (+17.1 per cent compared with September but -1.0 per cent compared with October 2017)

The statistics cover searches made at the counter, through the self-service terminals and via the Integrated Registration Information System Online Services.

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## **Registered General Building Contractor and its Authorised Signatory disciplined for misconduct in building works**

The Registered Contractors' Disciplinary Board has completed a disciplinary inquiry and decided that a Registered General Building Contractor (RGBC) and its Authorised Signatory (AS) should be disciplined for misconduct in building works under section 13(2)(b) of the Buildings Ordinance.

The Board ordered the RGBC and its AS each to be fined and to pay the costs of inquiry of the Board and the Buildings Department in the sums of \$123,625 and \$116,625 respectively. The Board's decision was published in the Gazette today (November 2). Details are available at the following link: [www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/20182244/egn201822448332.pdf](http://www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/20182244/egn201822448332.pdf).

The two respondents misconducted themselves in relation to the building works carried out to an earth-retaining wall of about 2.5 metres high and 7.8m long in Sai Kung between July and August 2009, which were required to be carried out by a Registered Specialist Contractor (Site Formation Works), whereas the RGBC concerned was not registered for such specialist works. Moreover, the building works were inconsistent with the plans approved by the Buildings Department and were done without the department's prior consent.

After conducting the disciplinary hearings, the Board made the above decision and order on April 17, 2018, in accordance with section 13 of the Ordinance.

The two Authorised Persons and one Registered Structural Engineer involved in the subject case were found guilty and disciplined by the Authorized Persons', Registered Structural Engineers' and Registered Geotechnical Engineers' Disciplinary Board in 2015 for misconducting themselves in a professional way in relation to the said building works under section 7(1A)(b) of the Ordinance. The relevant Gazette Notice is available at the following link:

[www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/20151942/egn201519427832.pdf](http://www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/20151942/egn201519427832.pdf).

A spokesperson for the Buildings Department emphasised that persons registered under the Ordinance and/or appointed to act on the registered contractors' behalf for the purposes of the Ordinance may be disciplined if they are negligent or misconduct themselves. They may be liable to criminal prosecution if they commit other offences under the Ordinance.