

UGC announces results of Research Assessment Exercise 2020

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The University Grants Committee (UGC) announced today (May 24) the results of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2020. About 70 per cent of the research projects assessed were judged by international experts to be "internationally excellent" or above – 25 per cent being "world leading" and 45 per cent "internationally excellent".

The Chairman of the UGC, Mr Carlson Tong, said, "The UGC is extremely pleased with the results of the RAE 2020 and congratulates the eight UGC-funded universities and their researchers. The encouraging outcome will provide positive guidance for the universities in their pursuit for excellence, which has benefited from the increased research funding from the Government over the past few years. In particular, I am most thankful to all parties involved for their concerted effort and commitment over the past year, during which the exercise pressed on in a most rigorous and robust manner under the difficult circumstances imposed by the pandemic".

The RAE 2020 is part of the UGC's ongoing efforts to assess the performance of the UGC-funded universities in research. It is a criterion-referenced assessment exercise against agreed quality levels as defined by international standards, covering research outputs completed during October 2013 to September 2019. In addition to research outputs, the RAE 2020 included new assessment elements in research impact and research environment, so as to encourage research of broader social relevance with high economic and social benefits, and take into account universities' strategy, resources and infrastructure in respect of research support. About 16 000 research outputs involving some 4 200 eligible academic staff, 340 research impact case studies and 190 research environment submissions were assessed in this exercise.

Mr Tong added, "Universities performed well in research impact, which reveals that the universities did a good job in transferring their research to innovative solutions, bringing substantial benefits to society and significant and tangible changes to people's lives."

The RAE 2020 was implemented under the purview of the Research Assessment Exercise Group (RAEG) of the UGC, under which 13 assessment panels of broad disciplines were formed. The panels involved 361 members, all distinguished scholars or research end-users with extensive professional knowledge and expertise in their respective fields. Among them, 252 (or 70 per cent) were non-local scholars from different parts of the world, ensuring independent and fair assessment according to international standards and underpinned the credibility of the RAE results from an international perspective.

The UGC conducted five RAEs in the past, in 1993, 1996, 1999, 2006 and 2014 respectively. The RAE 2020 has produced quality profiles of the eight UGC-funded universities to delineate relative strengths and identify research areas and opportunities for development.

The Deputy Convenor of the RAEG, Professor Wong Yuk-shan, said, "The objective of the exercise is to encourage world-class research and drive excellence. All assessments were based on the merits of the submissions, and were not about individual staff." He added that whilst the 2020 results should not be directly compared with those of the RAE 2014 due to different methodologies and elements being assessed, clearly all the universities had built upon their earlier success.

Regarding the interpretation of the RAE 2020 results, Professor Wong emphasised that the data should not be read out of context and that the universities had different combinations of disciplines covered in the exercise. "The RAE 2020 is not a ranking exercise. Direct comparison of results across different panels and universities should be avoided. When interpreting the RAE 2020 results, attention should be paid on the quality profiles of the units of assessment. Due regard should also be given to the universities' different roles, missions, discipline focuses and history," he added.

The results of the individual universities of the 13 assessment panels will be uploaded to the UGC website (www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/activity/research/rae/rae2020.html). The results of the RAE 2020 will be used to determine the distribution of part of the Research Portion of the UGC Block Grant to universities, which have the autonomy to allocate the funds internally as they see fit.

Mr Tong said, "The RAE results provide robust benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks for use within the UGC sector and for public information. They also provide guidance for the universities' future development in respect of pursuing research excellence and creating yet more synergies between research, teaching and learning, and knowledge transfer activities. While direct comparison between the current RAE, with 70 per cent of research projects judged to be 4-star and 3-star, as against the RAE six years ago, with 46 per cent judged to be 4-star and 3-star, cannot strictly be made due to the difference in methodologies and elements being assessed, the RAE 2020 results show that the universities' research quality has grown from strength to strength. We hope that the RAE 2020 will enhance public understanding of the benefits research can contribute to the community and thereby bring the research community closer to members of the public."

US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender notice

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender notice:

Tender date	:	May 26, 2021 (Wednesday)
Tender submission time	:	9 am to noon
Settlement date	:	May 27, 2021 (Thursday)
Repayment date	:	June 3, 2021 (Thursday)
Tenor	:	Seven days
Amount on offer	:	US\$10,000 Million

Note: Licensed Banks interested in participating in the tender for the first time is encouraged to provide US dollar settlement instructions by email (settlementsection@hkma.gov.hk) to the Hong Kong Monetary Authority's Settlement Team in advance, preferably two days prior to the tender. Required information includes name of corresponding bank, name of final beneficiary (must be the Licensed Bank participating in the tender), and account or CHIPS number of a US dollar bank account to be settled in the US. Such information needs to be provided once only, unless there is further change.

Subsidy Scheme for Retrofitting Roadside Skips 2021-22 opens for application

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has launched the Subsidy Scheme for Retrofitting Roadside Skips 2021-22 today (May 24) to subsidise the skip operators trade to retrofit roadside skips currently used for collecting construction waste, in order to meet the requirements in respect of road safety and environmental protection.

A spokesman for the EPD said, "The department, in collaboration with the skip operators trade, concluded a trial scheme in the second half of last year to retrofit 30 skips with fixtures to meet the requirements in respect of road safety as set by the Transport Department and environmental protection. Based on the experiences in retrofitting and operation gained in

the Scheme, and after finalising the fixture design, materials and cost limit for retrofitting, the EPD subsequently launched the Subsidy Scheme for Retrofitting Roadside Skips 2021-22."

The application period for the Scheme is from May 24 to September 30, 2021. Skip owners can submit applications during the application period. After receiving written notification on the acceptance of application, they can have their skips retrofitted at the 14 approved workshops before the end of this financial year. A one-off subsidy will be offered for each skip with an approved application to install fixtures to meet the road safety and environmental protection requirements. Those fixtures include yellow flashing lights, red and white reflective strips, hooks for cover mounting, display of a skip certification number, yellow painting at both ends of the skip, and marking of the name and telephone number of the skip company concerned.

"Two briefings were held to brief the skip operators trade on the Scheme and collect their views. The Scheme is being implemented on a voluntary basis. After checking and confirming that the retrofitted skips meet the requirements under the Skip Certification Scheme, the EPD will disburse the subsidy directly to the workshops to cover the substantial retrofitting fees, which would not exceed the upper subsidy limit of \$22,000 for each skip," the spokesman added.

The spokesman called on the skip operators trade to apply for the Scheme early and have their skips retrofitted as soon as possible, so as to enhance the trade's performance in road safety and environmental protection. The application form for the Scheme can be downloaded from the EPD website at www.epd.gov.hk/epd/skip_subsidy (Chinese only). For enquiries, please contact the EPD at 2187 3927.

[Illegal worker jailed](#)

A Filipino illegal worker holding a recognisance form was jailed by Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on May 22.

During operation "Twilight" conducted on May 20, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Tai Po. A female Filipino, aged 42, was arrested while working as a dish-washing worker. Upon identity checking, she produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits her from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that she was a non-refoulement claimant.

The illegal worker was charged at Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on May 22 with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in

force. She pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening on vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers who are arrested during any operation, with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

[Education Bureau to hold Virtual](#)

Information Expo on Multiple Pathways 2021

The Education Bureau (EDB) will hold the Virtual Information Expo on Multiple Pathways 2021 (Virtual Info Expo) on May 28 and 29.

A spokesman for the EDB said today (May 24) that the Virtual Info Expo will, through a one-stop online platform, provide the latest information as well as studies and career guidance on various articulation opportunities for secondary school graduates to make good preparation and planning for further studies and career progression. Other students, parents and teachers are also welcome to join.

"Around 30 institutions and organisations will display online booths at the Virtual Info Expo to provide information on locally accredited post-secondary programmes (including programmes eligible for various government subsidy schemes as well as vocational and professional education and training programmes), the Diploma Yi Jin programmes, as well as relevant online platforms such as the Information Portal for Accredited Post-secondary Programmes, the Electronic Advance Application System for Post-secondary Programmes, the Concourse for Self-financing Post-secondary Education, and the Qualifications Framework," he added.

In addition, Hok Yau Club and the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups will offer studies and career guidance services.

There will also be live talks with interactive question and answer sessions on multiple pathways, preparation and strategies for articulation to post-secondary education, and experience sharing by post-secondary students. Industry and institution representatives will also provide first-hand information about various post-secondary programmes and career development.

The Virtual Info Expo can be accessed at www.virtualinfoexpo2021.com. Prior registration is not required. The Virtual Exhibition Platform will be open until August 12. Interested parties are welcome to review the exhibition and recorded talks.

Details of the Virtual Info Expo are available at www.cspe.edu.hk/en/Resources-CareerGuidance-MultiplePathwaysExpo.html.