

International education and training hub

Overview

With top-notch universities and institutes, Hong Kong is well-positioned to be an international education and training hub. In the 2025-26 Budget, recurrent expenditure on education is HK\$102.86 billion (US\$13.18 billion), accounting for 17.5% of total government recurrent expenditure.

HK's attraction for Mainland and overseas students

- **Academic freedom** and learning in a cosmopolitan and liberal environment
- Universities provide **excellent prospects for internships** and **further education**
- **High-ranking, internationally recognised qualifications**
- **International perspective** and employment opportunities
- Vibrant **multi-cultural scene** expanding students' horizons
- Geographical and cultural **proximity favourable to Mainland students**

University rankings

- **5 universities in World Top 100:** Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2025/ Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2025: HKU (35th/17th), CUHK (44th/36th), HKUST (66th/47th), CityU (80th/62nd) and PolyU (84th/57th)
- **5 universities in Top 20 in Asia:** Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2024/ QS World University Rankings: Asia 2025/US News and World Report: Best Global Universities Rankings in Asia 2024-2025: HKU (6th/2nd/6th), CUHK (10th/6th/5th), HKUST (12th/11th/19th), CityU (15th/10th/12th) and PolyU (19th/17th/9th)
- **4 universities in World Top 5 most international universities:** Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2025: CityU (1st), HKUST (2nd), PolyU (3rd) and HKU (4th)
- **3 "young" universities in World Top 10:** Times Higher Education Young University Rankings 2024: HKUST (3rd), CityU (4th) and PolyU (7th)
- **3 EMBA programmes in World Top 25:** Financial Times EMBA Ranking 2024: CUHK Business School EMBA programme (No.22); HKU/Fudan MBA (International) programme (No.24). QS EMBA Rankings 2024 (Joint Programmes): Kellogg-HKUST EMBA programme (No.6); HKU/Fudan MBA (International) programme (No.15)
- In 2024, Bloomberg Businessweek ranked the **HKUST's MBA programme No.1 in Asia**
- In 2022, The Economist rated the **HKU's MBA programme No.1 in Asia**
- **World No.1 for 3 subjects:** Hospitality and Tourism Management (PolyU); and Library and Information Science (CityU) (ShanghaiRanking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects 2024); Education (HKU) (US News and World Report: Best Global Universities Rankings by Subjects 2024-2025)
- **World Top 10 subjects:** Dentistry (HKU, 2nd), Education (HKU, 3rd), Nursing (CUHK, 5th), Linguistics (HKU, 9th/ CUHK, 10th) and Geography (HKU, 10th) (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025)
- **Asia No.1 subjects:** Arts and Humanities (HKU), Endocrinology and Metabolism (CUHK), Gastroenterology and Hepatology (CUHK), Immunology (HKU), Infectious Diseases (HKU), Microbiology (HKU), Public, Environmental and Occupational Health (HKU), Social Sciences and Public Health (PolyU) (US News and World Report: Best Global Universities Rankings by Subjects 2024-

2025); Dentistry (HKU), Education (HKU) and Nursing (CUHK) (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025)

International schools

54 international schools (including one special school) are in operation in the 2024/25 academic year, providing different non-local curricula, including those of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the International Baccalaureate programme.

Student exchange programmes

- **University students** are encouraged to participate in exchange programmes. In the 2023/24 academic year, the eight universities funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) received around 5,100 incoming exchange students and also sent about 5,500 local students on exchange programmes lasting at least one semester.
- With an additional \$100 million allocated to expand the **International Youth Exchange Programme** to encourage young people to broaden their horizons, the Funding Scheme on International Youth Exchange has been operating since 2017.
- To attract more outstanding students along the Belt and Road to pursue their studies or career in Hong Kong, **Belt and Road Scholarships** have been expanded to cover all regions along the Belt and Road, as well as research postgraduate students, since the 2019/20 academic year. Starting from the 2024/25 academic year, the scholarship quota will increase by 50 per cent.
- The Government will collaborate with institutions to promote the Belt and Road Scholarship in countries outside the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

International Hub for Higher Education

Hong Kong is the only city with five universities in the world's top 100, and is ranked fourth globally for education competitiveness (International Institute for Management Development: World Competitiveness Yearbook 2024). We will develop Hong Kong into an international post-secondary education hub and cradle of future talents, enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international city. To highlight Hong Kong's position as an international post-secondary education hub, the Government will host more international education conferences and exhibitions.

- Starting from the 2024/25 academic year, the admission quota of non-local students to Government-funded post-secondary institutions is **doubled to 40 per cent**, with a focus on students from **B&R countries** and **the Mainland China**.
- Starting from the 2023/24 academic year, the UGC has injected \$100 million into the **Funding Scheme for Mainland and Global Engagement and Student Learning Experience** to encourage universities to offer students more exchange and learning opportunities outside Hong Kong, and promote an international learning experience.
- Launch a new round of Research Matching Grant Scheme totalling \$1.5 billion to attract more organisations to support research endeavours of institutions.
- Self-financing post-secondary institutions complement publicly-funded institutions and to support their capacity expansion and quality enhancement, a new round of the Land Grant Scheme and

the Start-up Loan Scheme, under which land sites are granted at nominal premium with interest-free loans, has been launched in end 2024.

- Starting from the 2025/26 academic year, the **Hong Kong Future Talents Scholarship Scheme for Advanced Studies** will offer scholarships to up to 1,200 local students enrolling in designated taught postgraduate programmes each year.
- Gradually increase the quota of the **Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme** to 400 places per academic year so as to attract more outstanding talents to study and conduct research in Hong Kong.
- Take forward the development of post-secondary education in the Northern Metropolis and strive to develop the Northern Metropolis University Town where local post-secondary institutions are encouraged to introduce more branded programmes, research collaboration and exchange projects with renowned Mainland and overseas institutions in a flexible and innovative manner.
- Relax the visa policy for Laotian and Nepalese talents for studying in UGC-funded institutions.

Non-local Graduates

- Step up promotion of the "**Study in Hong Kong**" brand to attract more outstanding non-local students.
- The Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates allows non-local graduates to stay or return and work in Hong Kong.
- Under the scheme, non-local students who have obtained an undergraduate or higher qualification in a full-time and locally-accredited programme in Hong Kong can apply to stay for two years after graduation without other restrictions on conditions of stay. The scheme has also been expanded to cover those who graduated from Hong Kong university's campus in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.
- Under the two-year pilot **Vocational Professionals Admission Scheme**, starting with 2024/25 admissions, non-local students of designated full-time professional Higher Diploma programmes of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) will be allowed to stay in Hong Kong for one year after graduation to seek jobs in their particular fields, to alleviate the manpower shortage in skilled trades.

Training hub

- The **Hong Kong International Aviation Academy**, the **MTR Academy**, the **Fire and Ambulance Services Academy** and the **Maritime Services Training Institute** offer specialised operational and management training.
- The **Hong Kong Academy of Finance** was set up in June 2019 with full collaboration amongst the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission, the Insurance Authority and the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority.
- The Hong Kong International Aviation Academy collaborates with aviation training institutions in the Mainland to launch a **GBA Youth Aviation Industry Internship Programme**, which aims to **send young people to the airports on each side for internship** from May 2023. 450 training places is available for the first year of the programme, with a view to attracting more young people to the aviation industry. The Academy will continue to partner with the National School of Civil Aviation of France to co-organise the **Advanced Master Programme in Air Transport Management** to **attract prospective students from Belt and Road countries** and consolidate Hong Kong's position as a

regional aviation training centre.

- With a commitment of \$300 million, the **Maritime and Aviation Training Fund (MATF)** was set up in 2014 to nurture talents for the maritime and aviation industries, more than 16,000 students and practitioners have benefited from MATF since its establishment. The 2023-24 Budget proposed to inject a sum of **\$200 million more into the MATF** to support manpower training of the logistics industry, promote the development of high end, high value added and smart logistics, and encourage the industry to collaborate with tertiary institutions and professional organisations to attract more young people to the industry. In addition, a **Maritime Services Traineeship Scheme** was launched to provide training opportunities for young people who aspire to a **career in maritime law**, to nurture more home grown maritime lawyers.
- The Construction Industry Council established the **Hong Kong Institute of Construction** in 2018 to nurture more high-calibre professionals. The 2023-24 Budget proposed to allocate an additional \$7 million to partner with the Hong Kong Institute of Construction to launch a **two year "First-hire-then-train" subsidy scheme**, to provide on-the-job training allowance to trainees who have chosen to enroll in Construction Safety Officer courses. It is estimated that the scheme will benefit about 300 trainees.
- In order to meet the manpower requirement for future infrastructure development and encourage young people to join the construction industry, the 2023-24 Budget proposed to allocate \$100 million for working with tertiary institutions to launch a two-year pilot scheme to provide on-the-job training allowance to students working in the construction industry during the study of part time construction related degree programmes. It is estimated that the scheme will benefit about 1,000 students. The scheme aims at enhancing the education and career ladder and also expanding the source of manpower supply for training up construction industry talents.
- The Development Bureau established the **Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Major Project Leaders** in July 2019. As the first of its kind in Asia, the CoE offers a high-level project management and leadership development programme to senior government officials and construction leaders involved in public projects. Starting from December 2021, the CoE also provides systematic training for mid-tier managers in the Government to enhance their professional skills and uplift project delivery capability, with a view to ensuring more effective use of public resources. The 2022-23 Budget sets aside \$30 million to strengthen the position of the CoE as an expert knowledge hub on project delivery, with an aim to enhancing the overall performance of works projects.
- The **Pilot Programme to Enhance Talent Training for the Insurance Sector and the Asset and Wealth Management Sector**, launched in August 2016 with commitment of \$100 million, aims to attract talents and enhance the professional competency of industry practitioners, which was conducive to the long-term growth of the sectors.
- The **Pilot Scheme on Training Subsidy for FinTech Practitioners** was launched in September 2022 to promote the professional development of fintech talent and expand the fintech talent pool in Hong Kong.
- The **Pilot Green and Sustainable Finance Capacity Building Support Scheme**, launched in December 2022, aims to encourage local eligible practitioners and prospective practitioners to participate in training related to green and sustainable finance in response to the new trend of developing low-carbon and sustainable economy.

- The 2022-23 Budget earmarked \$10 billion for the completion of works to upgrade and increase **healthcare teaching facilities of universities** to provide capacity for about 900 additional healthcare training places.
- **Human Resources Planning Commission**, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, commenced operation in April 2018.
- The **Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme** was launched in November 2014 to support up to 100 outstanding local students per cohort to pursue studies at world renowned universities outside Hong Kong.
- The **Pilot Scheme on Corporate Summer Internship on the Mainland and Overseas** was launched in March 2018 in collaboration with major companies to provide internship places for local youngsters on the Mainland and overseas.
- The **STEM Internship Scheme** was launched in 2020 to subsidise short-term internships for undergraduates and postgraduates taking STEM programmes in local universities.
- **World-class institutes have established a base in Hong Kong**, e.g. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Germany's Fraunhofer Institute for Production Technology, University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine, the Asia Society, and HKU-Pasteur Research Pole (France).
- As part of our efforts to nurture the necessary talents to develop Hong Kong into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, the HKAPA will study its role in the long-term nurturing of arts and cultural talents for Hong Kong and even the GBA, as well as consider the long-term need of establishing another campus in the Northern Metropolis and raise the proportion of non-local students. Funding support will be provided for launching an internship programme to offer placement opportunities in local arts groups and the West Kowloon Cultural District for graduates of the HKAPA and other tertiary institutions majoring in culture and arts-related disciplines.
- The **Hong Kong Academy for Wealth Legacy** was established under the Financial Services Development Council in November 2023 to provide a comprehensive talent training platform for the family office sector, asset owners and wealth inheritors, and to facilitate the development of family offices in Hong Kong.

Expand Vocational Talent Pool

Support vocational training to nurture local talents by enhancing capacity-building, offering a clear pathway for progress.

- The Government will continue facilitating the development of **Universities of Applied Sciences** to provide an alternative pathway for young people who aspire to pursue a career in professional skills sectors, and raise the status of vocational and professional education and training at degree level.
- The Vocational Training Council established the **Hong Kong Institute of Information Technology** to provide dedicated pre-employment and on-the-job training for the Information Technology sector. Relevant programmes has been launched in the 2024/25 academic year.

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