

# QF Conference on “Global Mobility – Making it Happen”

*Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) in Hong Kong  
- A Suggested Implementation Framework*

# Background

***“Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong” (the HER Report)*** published in December 2010 recommended that:

- ◆ a “transparent and trustworthy CATS should be developed for the whole post-secondary system” (Recommendation 6); and
- ◆ such system should be “appropriate for articulation between different levels and across different institutions at the same level” (Recommendation 37).

# Background

**In its response to the *HER Report* issued in November 2011, the Government expressed support for the UGC's proposal to develop vertical CATS to facilitate articulation from sub-degree programmes to senior year of undergraduate studies.**

**The UGC was tasked to conduct more research on CATS in other jurisdictions and propose an implementation plan applicable to both the publicly-funded and self-financed institutions.**

# Highlights of UGC's Proposed Implementation Plan

# Current Situation in Hong Kong

**Even without a detailed framework, necessary elements of CATS already exist:**

- **A Qualifications Framework (QF)**
- **An Accreditation Authority - the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)**
- **UGC-funded institutions already attach credits to their programmes and to the subcomponents (modules) of their programmes**
- **UGC-funded institutions already admit students with lower level qualifications onto their undergraduate programmes, giving them various amounts of credit for their previous study**

# Current Situation in Hong Kong

## Problems with the development of CATS:

**The imbalance between student demand and the availability of places in higher education institutions (UGC-funded or not)**

- **keen competition for places**
- **institutions are under less pressure to respond to students' demand and to develop a system for students' navigation and progression**
- **the incentive for the sector to develop a comprehensive CATS in Hong Kong is not strong**

# Current Situation in Hong Kong

## Problems with the development of CATS (cont'd):

- Lack of a common basis for calculating credits across the entire sector
- Lack of a common credit amount for the attainment of qualifications
- Lack of a common practice in articulating qualifications
- Lack of a common practice in admission of students from lower level to higher level qualifications
- No single quality assurance body

→ articulation arrangements unpredictable and not transparent to students

# Purpose of Strengthening CATS in Hong Kong

**A credit framework could:**

- **permit a student to gain a post-secondary education qualification in different institutions and at different times and that students maturing at different stages could all benefit**
- **help bind together UGC-funded institutions with other institutions so that the entire post-secondary system could act more concertedly**
- **with a transparent and open selection mechanism, students' earlier studies would not be wasted and that they can make better-informed decisions**



# Purpose of Strengthening CATS in Hong Kong

A properly functioning CATS would in principle bring about the following benefits –

- Lifelong learning
- Widening participation
- Flexibility
- Efficiency
- Transparency

# Proposed Implementation Framework

## Fundamental Principles:

- **Continued respect for academic freedom and institutional autonomy**
- **The exercise should not necessitate drastic or fundamental changes to the post-secondary education system**

# Proposed Implementation Framework

1<sup>st</sup> Recommendation of the UGC:

**that institutions be invited to negotiate articulation agreements with providers of sub-degree programmes, when approached**

# Proposed Implementation Framework

2nd Recommendation of the UGC:

**that the QF be modified so that it states the number of credits required for a qualification at each level**

# Proposed Implementation Framework

3rd Recommendation of the UGC:

**that a single quality assurance body for all of post-secondary education be established**

# Proposed Implementation Framework

4th Recommendation of the UGC:

**that funded institutions be encouraged to publish the criteria that they use for selecting articulating students and recognising prior learning**

**that institutions further develop a depository to record and report to the public such information of actual cases**

***Your responses and  
comments are  
welcome!***

***Thank You!***