

本署檔號 OUR REF.: UGC/GEN/416/2004 (19)

來函檔號 YOUR REF.:

電話 TELEPHONE: 2844 9914

中國香港灣仔港灣道 6 至 8 號瑞安中心 7 樓
7/F Shui On Centre, 6-8 Harbour Road
Wan Chai, Hong Kong, China
電話 Tel: (852) 2524 3987
傳真 Fax: (852) 2845 1596
電子郵件 E-Mail: ugc@ugc.edu.hk
網址 Homepage: www.ugc.edu.hk

6 June 2025

Prof Alexander Ping-kong Wai, JP
President and Vice-Chancellor
Hong Kong Baptist University
Office of the President and Vice-Chancellor
8/F, Shaw Tower, 34 Renfrew Road
Kowloon, Hong Kong

Dear Prof Wai,

Promoting an Inclusive Culture on Campus

With the growing number of non-local students pursuing their studies in UGC-funded universities, I am writing to encourage your University to facilitate the integration of non-local students with other students on your campus, and foster cultural diversity with reference to the initiatives being taken forward by different institutions across the UGC-funded sector.

All along, the UGC encourages our universities to admit non-local students from around the world as part of our effort to achieve greater internationalisation in our higher education sector. This will not only promote our development into an international hub for post-secondary education, but also provide opportunities for local students to interact with those from around the world on campus. With the relaxation of the enrolment ceiling of non-local students in UGC-funded taught programmes, we are pleased to note that the number of such students pursuing undergraduate programmes across all UGC-funded universities has increased from 14 756 in the 2023/24 academic year to 17 161 in the 2024/25 academic year. These students come from around 110 countries and regions and they pursue more than 200 programmes at present. The growth in number and the diversity speaks for the achievement of the UGC-funded sector in reaching out to the world and attracting talents from afar to Hong Kong.

Admitting international students with more diversified background is only the beginning, as it is important to help them integrate into the student community and adapt to the campus environment in order to yield benefits to the universities, local students and non-local students collectively. With the increase in the enrolment ceiling of non-local students, they will become a more sizeable part of the student body of the institutions. As such, universities are encouraged to devote more efforts and resources than ever to promote and drive a culture for inclusivity on campus.

Apart from knowledge acquisition, a comprehensive learning experience in universities should also comprise various aspects such as cultural exchanges, social networks, personal development, as well as language and employment support. In order to offer high-quality educational experience to non-local students, it is important for universities to provide comprehensive and suitable support on top of learning in classrooms, and to create a vibrant and diversified cultural environment so as to promote an inclusive culture on campus. We therefore encourage all UGC-funded universities to make reference to and disseminate best practices for strengthening support to non-local students in their academic and daily lives.

We are sure that your university has introduced a number of relevant initiatives over the years. Nevertheless, we would like to set out a few best practices identified so far to promote an inclusive culture on campus –

- (a) **Cultural exchanges**: Organise or participate in multi-cultural activities for non-local students to better understand the social landscape, festivals and customs of Hong Kong as well as foster a sense of belonging towards our city. On the other hand, non-local students may introduce their unique cultural backgrounds to other students through the festivities of different places, thereby promoting mutual exchanges among students and the sense of inclusivity on campuses, with a view to achieving “internationalisation at home”;
- (b) **Interpersonal network**: Under the peer support schemes established at institutional, departmental or hostel levels, local students are engaged to provide peer support to non-local students who are new to Hong Kong.

These arrangements will not only allow more effective support for non-local students, but also enable local students to connect with a wide variety of people from different backgrounds. Meanwhile, the universities may introduce incentive schemes to encourage non-local students to participate in various extra-curricular activities, through which they may develop interpersonal networks with students sharing similar aspirations or interests for better integration into campus life;

- (c) **Personal development of students:** To keep on track with study progress while adapting to the changes in living environment may bring challenges to the physical and mental conditions of non-local students. Universities may take initiatives in strengthening connections with them to show care and support. They may proactively identify students in need of further attention or assistance, and provide counselling services which could address problems frequently encountered by non-local students. Meanwhile, suitable religious facilities should be provided on campuses with a view to appreciating, respecting and fulfilling students' personal needs; and
- (d) **Language learning and employment support:** Under existing arrangements, eligible non-local graduates/students may apply to stay or return to work in Hong Kong after graduation under relevant schemes. Starting from last November, the Government has granted temporary exemption to full-time non-local undergraduate students studying in Hong Kong to take up part-time jobs, with a view to enhancing their personal experience and understanding of working in Hong Kong, as well as attracting them to stay for future development after graduation. Universities may provide non-local students with career development support, such as interview workshops and career talks tailored for them. Universities may also offer elementary Chinese/Cantonese courses which will not only enable these students to better integrate into the life on campus and in the community, but also help them explore suitable opportunities for future development in Hong Kong, thereby injecting impetus into our economic development.

At the same time, both local and non-local students may have special

needs in relation to their diet or daily life due to different cultures or religious beliefs. Universities should continue to gauge the views of different student groups extensively and pay heed to the situation, with the aim of providing specific campus facilities (e.g. multi-faith prayer rooms and toilets with appropriate sanitary fittings) and catering services (e.g. providing halal food options in catering outlets on campus) for meeting the practical daily needs of these students in their campus life as far as possible. A list of other examples of student integration measures canvassed from all UGC-funded universities is at Annex for reference.

On a related front, with the 2025/26 cohort of non-local students arriving Hong Kong in the next months, we would also like to appeal to your university to pay attention to potential scam activities targeting newcomers. We appreciate the extensive promotion activities and rigorous measures which your colleagues have introduced over the past year together with the Hong Kong Police Force and other relevant bodies such as the Investor and Financial Education Council, and would hope that your university could continue to strengthen such efforts as far as practicable to keep the cases of non-local students of your university falling victims of such unscrupulous activities to minimal.

We look forward to your continual support for promoting an inclusive culture on campus that would welcome students from different places to pursue their studies in Hong Kong while gladly calling your campus their home away from home. We may continue to gather information from your colleagues on your relevant measures and best practices for promoting student integration from time to time to facilitate collective progress and improvements. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



(Louis Leung)
Acting Secretary-General

c.c. Secretary for Education (Attn: Ms Jerry Ji)

**Examples of Initiatives by UGC-funded Universities for
Promoting Integration of Non-local Students into Campuses**

Pre-arrival Support and Orientation upon Arrival

- Offer comprehensive pre-arrival support and guidance through various resources (e.g. dedicated websites, handbooks, videos, e-publications, etc) and online sessions, covering essential topics such as pre-departure preparation, university life, information about Hong Kong, etc. Specifically, some topics include visa requirements, housing options, course registration, anti-scam tips, local culture, etc.
- Organise a wide range of post-arrival orientation activities such as networking events, orientation nights, campus tours, Hong Kong city tours, and activities in residential halls, etc.
- Deliver structured academic support through thematic information sessions and advising programs to help non-local students navigate university resources and plan their academic journeys.
- Establish peer support networks and programmes like buddy programmes for new non-local students to connect with senior non-local students, thereby facilitating their adjustment to study and live in Hong Kong.
- Provide personalised support services and guidance through multiple channels like online meetings, emails and phone calls. Assign designated departments/units/teams to support particular groups of non-local students such as postgraduates and student-athletes to address their unique needs.
- Introduce adjustment programmes and conduct one-on-one or group advising sessions to assess the adjustment progress and needs of the first-year non-local undergraduate students.

Dietary Diversity

- Provide specific dietary options including halal dishes and vegetarian on campus to cater for non-local students with dietary preferences and religious restrictions.

- Feature information on off-campus halal restaurants, vegetarian food, and other popular preferences among non-local students on universities' websites and other digital platforms for their easy reference.

Religion

- Set up prayer or quiet rooms on campus and in residential halls all year round to accommodate the religious pursuits and personal needs of non-local students. Opening hours of these facilities are extended during special periods, such as Ramadan for Muslim students.
- Provide spaces in campus facilities for organising religious activities and gatherings for local and non-local students.
- Celebrate festivals of other religions, such as Diwali, Holi, Ramadan, etc on campus through a variety of events.
- Organise religious activities and services including worship service, counselling, fellowship meetings, choir, etc to enhance the overall well-being of non-local students.

Language Support

- Provide diverse language courses (both credit and non-credit bearing) in Cantonese and Putonghua tailored to non-local students with different proficiency levels, backgrounds, needs and duration of study in Hong Kong, thereby facilitating their acquisition of language skills essential for daily life interactions as well as for academic and professional needs. Universities may make use of the Language Enhancement portion of the Teaching Development and Language Enhancement Grant as appropriate.
- Offer language mentoring schemes, peer tutoring and language exchange programmes such as in Cantonese, Putonghua and English that connect non-local students with local peers to promote language practice, cultural exchange and bonding.
- Incorporate cultural elements, for example, local heritage, customs, cuisine, etc into language learning and conduct different forms of activities (e.g. local tours,

cultural events, workshops, courses, conversation groups, etc) to help non-local students appreciate and experience local culture while they learn the language.

- Arrange thematic workshops (e.g. writing, presentation, etc) and individual language consultations to non-local students.
- Establish dedicated language services that offer digital and physical learning materials, study spaces, and support services for language self-learning.

Social and Cultural Integration

- Organise campus-wide intercultural events, both university-led and student-led, to allow both non-local and local students to experience and appreciate different cultures through cultural festivals, performances, cuisines, heritage, etc, thereby promoting cross-cultural exchange, inclusion and harmony on campus.
- Engage non-local students to establish non-local student associations, assume cultural ambassador roles, as well as organise intercultural activities to foster cross-cultural exchange and cultivate bonding among students.
- Arrange cultural tours to help non-local students explore and embrace different cultures and heritage. Universities with Mainland campuses may leverage such advantage to offer experience learning and cultural exchange activities among students.
- Introduce other supportive measures such as buddy programmes, host family schemes, etc.
- Conduct cultural sensitivity workshops for hall attendants and management company staff to enhance their understanding of cultural diversity and support for non-local students.

Psychological Support

- Offer multilingual counselling services to non-local students. Information on counselling services in other languages is also available to accommodate their diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Organise various mental health initiatives tailored to the specific needs of non-local students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Examples of initiatives are

orientations, personal growth workshops, psychological testing services, stress management seminars, etc.

- Set up peer support groups and non-local student associations to provide support for non-local students and create an inclusive campus environment. Organise networking and cultural events for non-local students to foster bonding and cultivate a sense of community.
- Train peer students as inclusion ambassadors or members of the Mental Health First Aid programme with knowledge and skills to promote the psychological well-being of non-local students.
- Establish 24-hour emotional hotline service or text-based counselling platform.
- Counsellors to conduct orientation workshops and support non-local students with mental health concerns by offering guidance and assistance as appropriate.

Career Guidance

- Offer comprehensive career support services for non-local students, including multilingual individual consultations, career education, recruitment talks, internships, mentorship and more to enhance their employability.
- Organise customised workshops for non-local students on the local job market, employment-related policies and procedures (e.g. visa application, work permits, etc) as well as specific challenges they may encounter.
- Facilitate networking events that connect non-local students with industry professionals, alumni and peers.
- Introduce online career resources and job boards featuring both local and international employment opportunities for non-local students.
