

**University and College Admission
Policies and Practices in Hong Kong:
Opportunities and Challenges in
Moving from Secondary to Tertiary
Education**



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HK: Basic Facts



- ∞ 1997 - reintegrated into China, but retains jurisdictional autonomy as SAR (including independent education system)
- ∞ Intensity of global flows and networking (3rd in the GAWC)
- ∞ 7 million people and 13% of youth in the age of 15-24 year old
- ∞ Declining youth population and increasing immigration (mainland and Asia)
- ∞ 3M households (a world's most expensive real estate)
- ∞ GDP per capita = approx. \$40,000USD

HK: Basic Facts



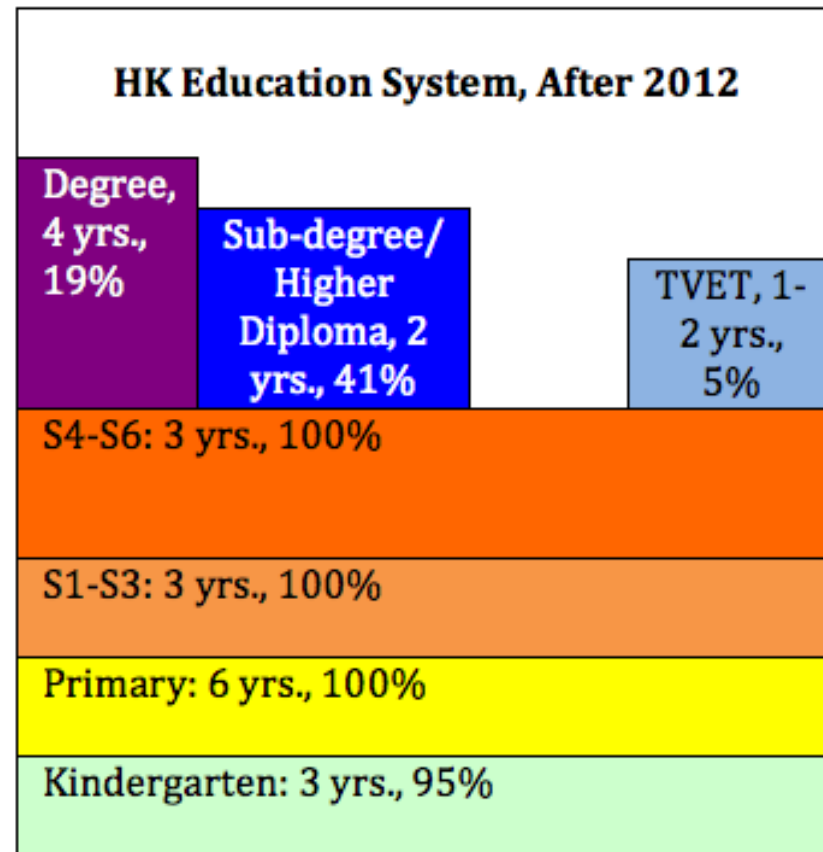
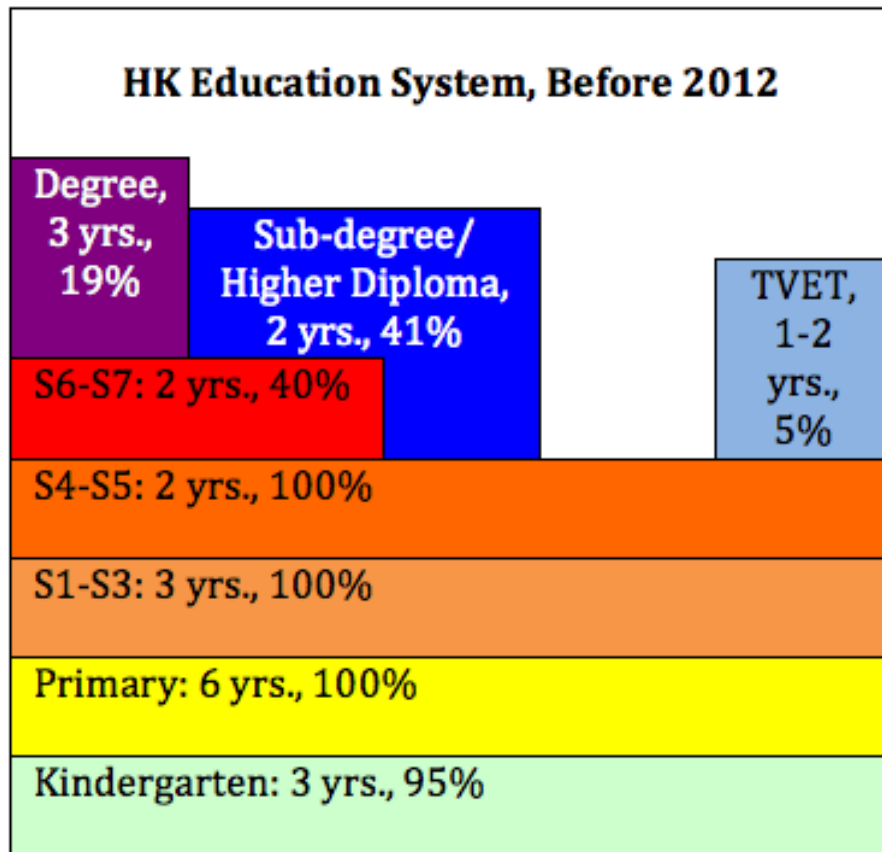
- ⌘ c. 1,100 schools (governmental, direct subsidy, catholic, international)
- ⌘ 12 universities (8 UGC funded) and 21 [community] colleges (12 university-affiliated)
- ⌘ Access: 19% - universities + 41% - sub-degree colleges (2000-2006)

HK: Changing Context



- ❧ Highly competitive exam-oriented education system with a mega private tutoring sector
- ❧ Cultural predispositions for higher learning (Confucian cultural heritage) and competition (Marginson 2013)
- ❧ Global network of cities - high income jobs and social status require multimodal competencies (e.g., multi-lingual, multi-cultural)
- ❧ In a move from elite to mass higher education – making local educational industry (hub) more internationalized to increase quality and reduce the outflow of local talent
- ❧ 33,000 young people leave HK annually to study abroad

HK: Changing Context



Research: Questions



- ❧ How does HK higher education system use admission policies and practices to mitigate tensions between elite and mass higher education?
- ❧ What do universities and colleges gain and lose while trying to reconcile these tensions?

Research: Data



- ❧ Current literature
- ❧ Institutional materials (admissions web-sites)
- ❧ Participants' (co-authors') observations (teachers, students; local, international)

Research: Sample

UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES

University of Hong Kong

Hong Kong University of Science and Tech

Chinese University of Hong Kong

Lingnan University

UNI-AFFILIATED COLLEGES

HKU SPACE

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Open University of Hong Kong

INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

Caritas Institute of Higher Education

Hang Seng Management School

Findings: Current Pressures



- ❧ Where do students come from?
- ❧ EMI vs. CMI (Cantonese and Mandarin)
- ❧ British & Chinese heritages, and US-ranking generated pressures
- ❧ Uneven opportunities: school autonomy and differences in curricula, resources, governance, cultures
- ❧ HKDSE as a unified graduating exam (away from HKCEE and HKALE): 4 core – English, Chinese, Mathematics and Liberal Studies, and 1 elective - Economics, Geography, Biology

Findings: Admissions Eligibility

UGC-FUNDED and PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Scores:

Level 3 – English and Chinese
Level 2 – other subjects
Differentiated elective scores
(decided by schools and programs)

Qualities:

Leadership
Communicative Skills
Creativity
Interactivity

UNI-AFFILIATED COLLEGES

Scores:

Level 2 – English and Chinese
Level 2 – other subjects

Qualities:

Less important
Second chance – mature students

INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

Scores:

Level 3 – English and Chinese
(transition to Bachelor's)

Findings: Application Process

UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES

Online JUPAS and non-JUPAS
(December)

Mainland China applicants
(early June – gaokao)

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

“First come-First served”

UNI-AFFILIATED & INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

Online “E-App”
Walk-In Admissions

Recruitment events in Beijing,
Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou

By mail

July –mid August
(after HKDSE results) and ongoing

Findings: Screening Mechanisms

UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES

Highest scores = scholarships

“First Choice”

Follow-up interviews

Focus group discussions

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

More flexible

UNI-AFFILIATED & INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

Interviews (with second chance)

Immediate offers at the recruitment sites

Findings: Admission Notifications

UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES

Can be immediate

January – August
(some in December)

JUPAS main round – early August
and confirm - by end August

Mainland China - July

Appeal to HK Examinations and
Assessment Authority

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

More flexible

UNI-AFFILIATED & INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

No specific schedules

Self-financing/ongoing process

Findings: Race or Balance?

UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES

Both

Rankings vs. Fairness

Scores vs. Personal Qualities

Increasingly, leadership predispositions

Balanced messaging of expectations

Balancing scholarships and self-financing

Encouraging ambitious students with disabilities

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

No rankings

Emphasizing service to professional communities

UNI-AFFILIATED & INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

No rankings

No competitiveness

Emphasis on professional skills

Social responsibility

Self-financing

Disability students are cautioned about facility capacities

Dilemmas and Further Resaerch



- ❧ **Scores vs. Qualities:** institutional variability in admissions (across public/private research and teaching universities; sub-degree colleges; faculties, departments, programs)
- ❧ **Institutional** capacities, missions and resources vs. **students'** capacities, expectations and resources
- ❧ **Admission** numbers vs. **employability** results
- ❧ Student **mobility** vs. retention of local talents at the time of global **competition** for talent
- ❧ The increasing need for more **sophisticated** student advising centers, career counseling services, and alumni networks at universities and colleges

THANK YOU!



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