



## Annual Report

(1 September, 2002 – 31 August, 2003)

*Supporting students*

Careers Education and Placement Centre

The University of Hong Kong

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Careers Education and Placement Centre**

**Annual Report for 2002 - 2003**

**I. Preamble**

1. The year under review was characterised by a general economic downturn, deflation and rising unemployment. Nonetheless, amid this bleak economic climate, new graduates of the University performed well in the employment arena – with an exceptionally low unemployment rate of 0.8% at six months after graduation. On the other hand, competition for jobs at the top end of the market remained very keen, our major competitors being returnees from overseas prestigious universities. This scenario tends to indicate that the challenge for most HKU graduates is not the problem of finding a job, but the need to continually improve qualities to aim at jobs at the top end, and to keep pace with new development trends in the economy.

**II. Employment situation**

*Bachelor's Degree Graduates*

2. It is pleasing to note that unemployment rate dropped to 0.8% from the previous year's 3.5%. This was the lowest unemployment rate among all local tertiary institutions :

Table 1 Employment Situation at Six Months after Graduation 2002

University	HKU	CUHK	UST	Poly U	City U	BU	LU
Unemployment Rate	0.8%	2.6%	5.9%	2.5%	6.5%	1.6%	7%

Source : *Sing Tao Daily News*

In fact, graduates from the following degree programmes were fully engaged in either paid employment or further studies at six months after graduation :

BBA, BBA(Law), BEcon,  
BDS  
BEd (LangEd),  
BEng(CIV), BEng(CIV-ENV), BEng(IMMSE), BEng(ME), BEng(EESE),  
BEng(InfoE)  
BSocSc, BSocSc (Govt. & Laws)  
BSc (Sp. & Hear Sc), BSc (Surv)

3. Two reasons may account for this significant improvement. Firstly, many more students continued to pursue a higher degree – from 20% in 2001 to 26% in 2002. This is an encouraging development as Hong Kong is going through a process of transformation to a knowledge-based economy. On the individual level, a higher degree is likely to improve the person's earning power. The CePc's survey statistics reveal that in 2002 the average salary for research postgraduates (at \$18,460 per month) is 68% higher than that of a Bachelor's Degree graduate. Secondly, new graduates are increasingly flexible and accommodating. They realize the importance of work experience and are more willing to start at the basic level. They understand that the route to improved income is a track record of successful contributions to the employer.
4. The five largest occupational fields for Bachelor's Degree graduates of 2002 were :

*Table 2 Major Occupational Fields for Bachelor's Degree Graduates*

Engineers	10%
Teachers	9.9%
Medical Doctors	6.9%
System Analysts/Computer Programmers	6.6%
Marketing/Sales Executives	5.9%

*Source : Graduate Employment Survey 2002*

5. The effect of deflation is also reflected in Bachelor's Degree graduates' salaries which decreased by 17% from \$13,217 per month in 2001 to \$11,000 per month in 2002.

#### *Research Postgraduates*

6. On the basis of number of vacancies per graduate, the Joint Institution Job Information System (JIJIS) recorded more vacancies for M.Phil graduates than for Bachelor's Degree graduates (Table 3). Many employers prefer to recruit postgraduates because they are perceived to be stronger in the following aspects : maturity, dedication, attention to details, analytical ability, ability to handle complex issues and research skills.

*Table 3 Vacancies in JIJIS 2002 - 2003  
(Civil Service not included)*

	For Bachelors	For M.Phil	For Ph.D
Any Discipline	4,438	785	176
No. of graduates	2,628	178	135
No. of vacancies per graduate	1.7	4.4	1.3

7. The five largest occupational fields for postgraduates of 2002 were :

*Table 4 Major Occupational Fields for Postgraduates*

Banking and Finance	30%
Marketing/Sales	27%
Engineering	20%
Teaching/Lecturing	14%
Administration/Management	13%

*Source : Graduate Employment Survey 2002*

8. Following the downward trend in salary levels across the board, the average salary of research postgraduates dropped 4.3% from \$19,298 per month in 2001 to \$18,460 per month in 2002.

### III. CePc activities

#### *Services to students*

9. The CePc continued to carry out its mission in offering two prongs of services to students, namely, careers guidance and placement activities, to help them prepare for job application and secure employment.
10. In pace with employers' recruitment programmes and selection exercises, the CePc organized a full package of activities to assist students to pass the selection hurdles. These activities included career advice (tips sent through email and posted on CePc homepage) and demonstration and practice sessions on interviews and written tests. We also invited practising executives and professionals to share experience with students, give feedback on their written applications and role play selection interviews with them.
11. These guidance sessions were favourably received by students. On a five-point scale (5 being the best), 86% of the 1,860 participants gave a score of 4 and 5. The success rates at selection interviews also increased. Based on the available shortlisting information, of the 33 rounds of selection exercises conducted by 9 companies, the success rates of 23 rounds (70%) increased. The increased percentage ranged from 1.5% to 67% compared with the success rates last year.
12. To complement the information that students received from recruitment talks, career talks on various industries and occupations were held alongside the Campus Recruitment Programme (CRP). Students were also advised to make use of the Prospect Planner, a computer-assisted guidance system, to acquire basic self-understanding before seeking one-to-one consultation with a career adviser.

13. Current affairs topics and related questions were posted on the CePc homepage which also served as a discussion forum for students to give their views and comments. A summary of the Centre's guidance activities is at Appendix I.

*Services to employers*

14. The Centre's major services to employers are the Campus Recruitment Programme and Job Listing Service. During the year, 71 employers conducted recruitment talks on campus and another 9,538 employers advertised 28,943 positions through the Job Listing Service, which included vacancies posted on JIJIS (Joint Institution Job Information System) and NETjob, a HKU-only job board. Statistics under the Job Listing Service are presented at Appendix II.
15. Among the local institutions, HKU continued to take the lead in securing offers from our major employers. Overseas returnees performed remarkably well this year, capturing 27% of the vacancies from the campus recruiters.

*Table 5 Job offers from CRP clients to Universities*

	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
HKU	33%	23%	28%	33%	28%
2 <sup>nd</sup> local	21%	21%	22%	6%	12%
3 <sup>rd</sup> local	12%	18%	16%	5%	9%
Other local	14%	30%	26%	6%	21%
Overseas	20%	8.5%	8%	6%	27%
Unspecified /	-	-	-	44%	3%
Total no. of job offers	256	389	652	162	299
Response rate	37%	24%	44%	41%	40%

*Note 1 - Job offers from audit firms were not included in this table, as breakdown by institution was not available.*

16. On the other hand, job offers from the Job Listing clients to HKU graduates are also on the increase.

*Table 6 Job offers from Job Listing clients to Universities*

	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
HKU	16%	16%	11%	26%	23%
2 <sup>nd</sup> local	18%	15%	14%	14%	15%
3 <sup>rd</sup> local	17%	16%	16%	12%	14%
Other local	44%	44%	48%	34%	39%
Overseas	5%	10%	11%	5%	8%
Unspecified	-	-	-	9%	1%
Total no. of job offers	932	974	1,819	382	384
Response rate	5.9%	5%	3.4%	2.1%	7%

*Job satisfaction*

17. Apart from a high employment rate, it is gratifying to note that the job satisfaction rates of our graduates and postgraduates were also very high. Responses to our Graduate Employment Survey 2002 reveal that 86% of the Bachelor's Degree graduates were satisfied with their job while the equivalent figure for postgraduates was 88%.

**IV. Improving Quality**

18. HKU graduates have been ranked 'the most preferred university graduates' by annual surveys conducted by Education 18. com since 2000. The Centre's employment statistics in Tables 5 and 6 above do bear witness to this survey result. Among the employers who participated in our Campus Recruitment Programme (CRP), except for audit firms, our graduates secured the largest percentage (28%) of job offers (Table 5). Our market share with advertisers in JIJIS who are mainly SMEs, was not as favourable in the past but has started to improve since 2002 (Table 6). The combined effect of our graduates' successful performance in the recruitment programmes of CRP and JIJIS, employers has resulted in a very low unemployment rate (0.8%). Nevertheless, we have observed that graduates returning from overseas emerged to be our formidable competitors. We learned from employers that many top-end posts, such as management consultant, telecommunication management trainee, investment banking analyst, traineeship with international law firms, were filled by Hong Kong returnees educated in prestigious overseas institutions. They edged over HK graduates in international exposure, maturity, general knowledge, common sense, initiative, presentation and proficiency in English.

19. If HKU aspires to become a member of the top 25 league, greater efforts must be made to enhance our students' qualities and to prepare them for the top end of the job market.
20. The CePc believes that to achieve this objective, a programme designed to complement the academic curriculum with internship should be introduced. In the programme, students will be trained to take the initiative to set own learning targets, to prepare for each programme activity and to monitor own performance and progress throughout. During the internship, students are expected to fill in their training portfolio with the activities that they have attended, and record their performance to illustrate their attainment on each of the learning targets. Finally, the employer/supervisor will give feedback and appraisal on the students' performance. It is envisaged that such co-curricular internship will on the one hand enhance the students' competency and, on the other, add a testimony to their curriculum vitae.

#### **V. Keeping Pace with New Development Trends**

21. In his 2003 Policy Address, the Chief Executive has highlighted, among other things, the way to take Hong Kong forward amid the process of transformation to a knowledge-based economy. Four major economic sectors that will generate higher value for Hong Kong's economy have been identified, namely, finance, logistics, tourism and producer services. Furthermore, to enhance competitiveness, Hong Kong must pool its strengths with cities in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region. Economic integration with the PRD, particularly in the four pillar sectors, is the direction that Hong Kong is to work towards in the coming years.
22. To capitalise on these new development trends, the Careers Advisory Board (CAB) has strengthened its membership with industry leaders from these sectors and has established six Focus Groups on Finance, Tourism, International Trade and Logistics, Producer Services, Pearl River Delta and Major Employers in other 'traditional sectors' respectively to reflect, inter-alia, on the sectors' human resources need and to identify internship and employment opportunities for students and graduates of the University.
23. In order to enlist wider support from the community at large and to secure faculties' and teaching departments' collaboration in educating students for the future, the CAB has also decided to organize an Open Forum on Hong Kong's Economic Transformation in early 2004. The CePc has embarked on the process of preparing our students for these emerging opportunities.

#### **VI. Goals for the Coming Year**

24. After reviewing our current services and feedbacks from students and employers, the CePc has set the following goals for the coming year :
  - a. To continue to give students guidance on how to choose occupations and succeed in securing employment;

- b. To make extra efforts to attract first and second year students to start preparing themselves for their future career;
  - c. To conduct researches into internship and employment opportunities in specific industry sectors;
  - d. To develop and maintain closer personal contacts with employers in Hong Kong and the Mainland; and
  - e. To study employment problems experienced by graduates of specific degree programmes and to discuss the problems with faculties and student associations, with the objective of achieving 100% engagement, either in employment or further studies, at six months after graduation.
25. We shall continue to use the following performance indicators to measure the level of our achievement :
- a. Further studies rate
  - b. Relevance of work to study
  - c. Job satisfaction
  - d. Employment rate
  - e. Time taken to secure employment
  - f. Number of job offers

## VII. Usage of CePc Services

26. The CePc's services were well received by students, as reflected in their responses to our annual Graduate Employment Survey. The overall usage was satisfactory – 67% of the respondents made use of our services, the most popular ones being Vacancy Information on homepage, Guidance Materials and Job Notices on noticeboards. As most of the graduates from professional disciplines such as Architecture, Dentistry and Medicine entered their respective professions through the arrangements of their own Faculties, only a small percentage of students from these disciplines used CePc services. Excluding this group of students, over 80% of the student population made use of our services.
27. As regards the usefulness of these services, Vacancy Information on homepage ranked first, with 70% of the respondents finding it useful and very useful, followed by Enquiry Desk (65%) and Job Notices on noticeboards (59%).
28. The message is clear. Students consider services directly related to placement and guidance most important. Their feedbacks have undoubtedly reassured us that the goals we set for ourselves are in the right direction and will meet the needs of the student population. I trust that in the coming year all staff of the CePc will continue to work with concerted efforts towards the achievement of our goals.

Louisa Li  
 Director  
 Careers Education and Placement Centre

September 2003



**Careers Education and Placement Centre Activities in 2002-03****Attendance at talks, workshops and one-to-one sessions**

		<i>Attendance</i>	
		<i>2001-2002</i>	<i>2002-2003</i>
<b>I.</b>	<b>Gathering Information</b>		
1.	Careers Talks	576	1,193
2.	Talks on Further Study	348	293
		<u>924</u>	<u>1,486</u>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Building a Winning Resume</b>		
1.	Key Skills Training for Civil Engineering III	349	456
2.	Group Discussion Training for other students	168	149
		<u>517</u>	<u>605</u>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Passing Selection Hurdles</b>		
	<i>Paper Screening</i>		
	Resumes reviewed by counsellors and alumni	941	893
	<i>Interview Practice</i>	1,419	1154
	<i>Selection Test Exercises</i>	1,396	2,307
	<i>Assessment Centre Exercises</i>	434	178
	<i>Skin Care and Make-up Workshops</i>	284	178
		<u>4,474</u>	<u>4,710</u>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Other training sessions</b>	581	280
	Entrepreneurship for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	1,017	n/a
		<u>1,598</u>	<u>280</u>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Checking out Vacancies</b>		
	Recruitment Talks	6,830	8,433
	Campus Interviews	777	702
	Written Tests on Campus	1,738	803
	Labour Department Employment Exhibition	650	n/a
		<u>9,995</u>	<u>9,938</u>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Outplacement</b>	30	n/a
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Guidance</b>		
	Help Desk	14,227	21,054
	Guidance through e-mail (including distillery and e-mail handled by staff)	2,577	1,849
	Advising, Coaching, Counselling	497	686
		<u>17,301</u>	<u>23,589</u>
		<u>34,839</u>	<u>40,608</u>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Homepage and Prospect Planner</b>		
1.	No. of visits to CePc homepage	609,127	1,977,800
2.	No. of Prospect Planner users	3,148	1,420

(Sep. 02 – July 03)

***Job Listing Service***  
*Last year's figures in parenthesis*

	No. of employers	No. of vacancies	Differences
Graduate positions	5,002 [ 3,847 ]	11,366 [ 10,077 ]	+30% employers +13% vacancies
- for NEW graduates	2,670 [ 2,623 ]	6,773 [ 7,181 ]	+1.8% employers -6% vacancies
- for RECENT graduates	2,332 [ 1,224 ]	4,593 [ 2,896 ]	+91% employers +59% vacancies
Temporary positions	773 [ 532 ]	3,544 [ 2,846 ]	+45% employers +25% vacancies
Graduate Employment Training Scheme (GETS)	423 [ n/a ]	1,507 [ n/a ]	n/a
Part-time positions	2,681 [ 2,291 ]	9,242 [ 10,937 ]	+17% employers -16% vacancies
Summer positions	659 [ 738 ]	3,284 [ 4,715 ]	-11% employers -30% vacancies
- Summer jobs	430 [ 630 ]	1,895 [ 3,656 ]	-32% employers -48% vacancies
- Internships	229 [ 108 ]	1,389 [ 1,059 ]	+112% employers +31% vacancies
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,538</b>	<b>28,943</b>	